Sheridan

THE RIVALS

ED. *by* C.B. KAPO

ASWATI SADAN MUSSOORIE

THE RIVALS

(SHERIDAN)

With a detailed Introduction, Text, Notes, References, Important explanations, questions and Answers

Edited by

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PREFACE

Lack of adequate Indian editions of this play has primarily prompted me to bring out this edition of Sheridan's *The Rivals*. Whatever editions, Indian or foreign, of this delightful comedy are available in the market, give so little in the name of Introduction to the playwright of Notes on the text, that they do not fulfil the needs of students, nor do they provide enough help to those who read only for pleasure.

I have, therefore, concentrated on the requirements of a mature reader, in preparing this edition. The book appreciates and deals with almost all the important aspects of the play and the playwright, which will enable a reader to assess correctly the merit of Sheridan's work. Sheridan was the most delightful comendian of his time and has been enjoyed not a little, ever since. I have every reason to hope that this edition will help the student of Sheridan to have a more enlightened enjoyment of him.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION ON THE AUTHOR

1—LIFE OF SHERIDAN

Richard Brinsley Sheridan was born in an Irish family of Dublin on October 30, 1751. His grandfather, Dr. Sheridan, was a clergyman, the friend of Swift and the equal of him in reckless wit, though no match to his intellect. Richard's father was the second son of this gentleman and is known to have been among Dr. Johnson's acquaintances. Of him, Johnson once declared : "Sheridan is dull, naturally dull ; but it must have taken him a deal of pains to have become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, Sir, is not in nature." In the beginning Richard's father followed the vocation of an actor in Dublin, but later came to be the manager of a theatre. Since he migrated to England, he at first acted with the illustrious Garrick at the Drury Lane but very soon established himself at the famous centre of fashion, Bath, as a teacher of oratory. The family had arrived in England in 1760, and Sheridan was sent to Harrow in 1762, where he remained for seven years. At Harrow he did well but is not known to have shown any exceptional promise. His relations with his father, at the moment, were not quite happy, with whom he has been described as being "more respectful and attentive than close and cordial." It was from his mother that he inherited literary talent. She was one Miss Frances Chamberlaine, when his father got her in marriage by sheer good luck. She was the author of a novel *Sidney Biddulph* and a few plays that got some fame. Among the plays there was one *A Trip to Bath*, which might have influenced Sheridan in writing '*The Rivals*'. Money was scarce with his father when Richard left Harrow in 1768 and so he could not be sent to a university. For about two years he underwent some private tutoring at London in Mathematics, languages, riding and fencing. His mother

having died in 1767, he then moved to Bath to live with his father. It is now that we see in him the sprouting of the literary and in the form of a three-act farce, *Jupiter*, written in collaboration with his school-fellow Halhead. He also scribbled some amateurish verse translations but soon gave up the attempt, for practical romance. He had been introduced to one Miss Elizabeth Ann Linley, the celebrated beauty of Bath and the daughter of a famous singing master and composer of Bath. At the moment this romantic Maid of Bath—for so she was called—was only sixteen but was a little too much surrounded by the wooing beaux and fops. Sheridan's elder brother Charles was already among her admirers, when Richard and his friend Halhead were introduced to her. One suitor, very rich and elderly, Mr. Long was favoured by Linley for his daughter's hand, but was disliked by her. At her request, Mr. Long very chivalrously withdrew his suit and also settled £3000 upon sweet Miss Linley. Another suitor was one Capt. Matthews, a married man with a bad name and an equally bad character. Miss Linley was so afraid of this man that while she made Sheridan her confidant in her distress, she also proposed a romantic flight to France with him as her escort. The plan was effective and there was an elopement. As they reached Calais, Miss Linley recognised in Sheridan an ardent lover and admirer of hers. The love soon became fruitful and they were secretly married at Calais. As they returned, they met the girl's father, Linley, whose anger they could turn into favour with their tact and all the three came to Bath happily reconciled. Their tact, however, failed with Sheridan's father who could not be appeased. The frustrated rival, Capt. Matthews, tried to insult Richard by pouring abuse at him in the local papers. Sheridan could not tolerate this and fought with him a duel, but with no consequence. The slander from Matthews continued and another duel was the result in which Sheridan was seriously wounded, and the tussel ended there. When he was well, he was happily remarried to his wife, on April 13, 1773 to the satisfaction of all. The newly weds thereafter made London their home.

As their living and moving in the genteel society of London proved coslty, Sheridan thought of studying law and joined the Middle Temple. In spite of the fact that the need for

money was pressing hard he did not allow his wife to sing on the stage. However his wife did often sing at Oratorio, a fact recalled in the verses of M.P. Andrews. She also found favour with the celebrities of the day, among whom Fanny Burney wrote in her Diary that "the elegance of Mrs. Sheridan's beauty is unequalled by any I ever saw except Mrs. Crewe", and Horace Walpole recorded that George III "ogles her as much as he dare do in so holy a place as an Oratorio". Meanwhile less of law and more of drama had occupied Sheridan's mind, and in about a year after his marriage he had completed *The Rivals*. On the 17th January 1775, it was first staged at Covent Garden Theatre with little or no success and had to be withdrawn. For about two weeks he worked upon it again, making ingenious changes here and there. It was now re-staged and met with surprising applause from the audience and the critics alike. It was widely acclaimed as the most admirable comedy of the time. This led him now to devote himself wholeheartedly to the stage and in May 1775 he produced a farce in two acts: *'St. Patrick's Day'* or *'The Scheming Lieutenant.'* This was a failure but, his next attempt, a musical opera. *The Duenna*, in the very first season ran for seventy-five nights and was highly praised. The chief among its lavish admirers was Lord Byron himself. The music of this opera was composed by his father-in-law, Linley with whose help and that of another friend Dr. Ford, in 1776, he purchased from Garrick his interest in the Drury Lane Theatre and soon became its manager. He was now the most talked of dramatist of the day and had the unique advantage of having the lion's share in an established theatre. Here, at Drury Lane, in February 1777, he produced Vanbrugh's play *The Relapse* under the name *A Trip to Scarborough*. This was a great year for Sheridan and for the English Comedy for in this year came out Sheridan's masterpiece, *The School for Scandal*. It was a witty and satiric study of his corrupt contemporaries and was so successful that money poured in torrents and with it Sheridan bought the full shares in his theatre. After about two years, in 1779, was produced the last play from his pen, *The Critic*. It was a burlesque full of sparkling wit and was hailed as such. With this play Sheridan bid farewell to his career as a dramatist and plunged himself heart and soul into politics. Among the literary works that he did after this, two pieces are worth

mentioning, a translation from Kotzbue, named *Pizzaro* and a *Monody on the Death of Garrick*.

Meanwhile he had got acquainted with the Whig party leader and on the particular insistence of Fox was drawn into active politics. He was elected to Parliament in 1780 as a member from Stafford, and in 1782 in the Rockingham Ministry, that remained only for a short time, he was given the post of Under-Secretary of State. A little after 4 months in the Shelburne ministry he became Secretary of the Treasury. However, it was as an orator that he earned particular fame. He was prominent among those that brought impeachment on Warren Hastings for his atrocities on the Begums of Oudh. His singular speech of more than five hours' duration, won praise even from Pitt. Another notable piece of oratory from Sheridan came at the time of French Revolution when he opposed Edmund Burke on the issue. The days of misfortunes for Sheridan started after the death of Fox. Even when Sheridan was a promient member of the Whig party, he was not elected its leader in succession to Fox, although in 1806 in the Ministry of all the Talents he was awarded the post of Treasurer to the Navy. In 1806, a sudden fire almost destroyed his Drury Lane Theatre and Sheridan was in great financial stringency. His wife also had died in 1792 and he had married one Miss Ogle in 1795. However, he was not happy and in 1812 his political career came to an end when he could not be elected to Parliament. The greatest blow came in 1815 when he was arrested for debt and had to bear the indignity of a sponging-house. This was a great shock from which he never recovered. He died on July 7, 1816 in miserable conditions. But he was accorded a splendid funeral and was buried in the Westminster Abbey in the Poets' Corner.

Sheridan is to-day remembered not for his political work but as the "foremost writer of English artificial comedy." It is little known why he gave up his playwright's career so early. He lived to be sixty-five but at the small age of 28 he had bid good-bye to drama for good. Was there a serious decline in his dramatic powers or did he prefer to follow the more glamorous path of luxury and power ? For us today what is more important is, as Herring puts it: "that Sheridan was the most successful, the most talked of and the most con-

spicuous young man of his time. He set a fashion in the theatre and he was looked up to by the younger, who saw more vividly than we can now the glamour of romance that hung round him."

2. His Works.

1. *The Rivals* : First produced at the Covent Garden Theatre on 17th January 1775.
2. *St. Patrick's Day* : A two-act farce, first acted at the Covent Garden in 1775.
3. *The Duenna* : A musical opera, produced at the Covent Garden in 1775.
4. *A Trip to Scarborough* : A version of Vanbrugh's *The Relapse.* First produced at Drury Lane in 1777.
5. *The School for Scandal* : His masterpiece in comedy; produced at Drury Lane in 1777.
6. *The Critic* : His last original play; a burlesque; produced at Drury Lane in 1779.
7. *Pizzaro* : A translation of a play by Kotzebue produced at Drury Lane in 1799.
8. *Political Speeches* : First collected and published in 1816.

3. Principal Dates in the Life of Sheridan

1751 : Richard Brinsley Sheridan born at 12, Dorset Street, Dublin, Oct. 30; second son of Thomas Sheridan, the younger (actor and elocutionist) and Frances Chamberlaine, his wife (author of plays and novels); grandson of the Rev. Thomas Sheridan, D.D., friend and biographer of Swift.

1762-8 : R. B. Sheridan at Harrow School.

1771 : Thomas Sheridan (father of R. B. S.) settles in Bath.

1771-3 : R. B. S. in London.

1771 : Published, with N. B. Halhead verse translation of *Epistles* of Aristaenetus (ed. 2, 1773); later, contributed verses to *Bath Chronicle*.

1772 : Accompanies Miss Elizabeth Ann Linley to Calas.

1772 : Fights duels with Capt. Matthews (March); in the second is severely wounded.

1773 : At Waltham Abbey; studies mathematics, astronomy, etc.

1773 : Enters Middle Temple (April 6).

1773 : Marries Miss Linley (April 13).

1773-4 : At East Burnham and London.

1775 : *The Rivals* brought out at Covent Garden Theatre (Jan. 17); improved version (Jan. 28).

1775 : *St. Patrick's Day* performed at Covent Garden (May 2).

1775 : Buys Garrick's share in Drury Lane Theatre; it opens under his direction Sept. 21.

1777 : Gives *The Rivals* at Drury Lane (Jan. 16).

A Trip to Scarborough (Feb. 24).

The School for Scandal (May 8).

1779 : *The Critic* (Oct. 30).

1779 : Elected member of the Literary Club on proposal of Dr. Johnson (March).

1780 : M.P. for Stafford (maiden speech Nov. 20); opposes civil war in America.

1782 : Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Lord Rockingham's second Ministry.

1783 : Refuses to serve under Lord Shelburne; Secretary to the Treasury (Feb. 21) under Duke of Portland.

1783 : Portland Ministry dismissed (December).

1787 : Speech in Parliament on the Begums of Oudh (Feb. 7); replies to defence, 1794.

1788 : Confidential adviser to Prince of Wales.

1788 : Upholds rights of the Prince to assume Regency without sanction of Parliament.

1788 : Speech as Manager of the Impeachment of Warren

Hastings before the High Court of Parliament in Westminster Hall (June 3, 6, 10).

1788 : Death of Sheridan's father (Aug. 14).

1791 : Old Drury Theatre ordered to be pulled down and rebuilt.

1792 : Death of Mrs. R. B. Sheridan (June 21).

1794 : First performance at New Drury (April 21).

1794 : Sheridan marries Miss Elizabeth Jane Ogle, of Winchester.

1794 : Speech in Parliament against French War.

1797 : Speech on Mutiny at the Nore.

1798 : Defends freedom of the Press in Parliament.

1799 : Opposes the Union (Jan. 23).

1799 : *Pizarro* produced (May 29).

1803 : Speech urging resistance to Bonaparte.

1806 : Treasurer of the Navy in Ministry of all the Talents ; M.P. for Westminster.

1807-12 : Loses seat for Stafford; defeated at General Election; M.P. for Ilchester 1807-12 ; again defeated at Stafford 1812. Last Speech (June 21).

1809 ; Drury Lane Theatre burnt (Feb. 24).

1813 : Arrested for debt (? August).

1816 : Richard Brinsley Sheridan dies at 17 Savile Row (July 7).

1816 : Buried in Westminster Abbey (July 13).

4. The English Comedy Before Sheridan.

Before Sheridan and his glorious predecessor, Goldsmith, came to the forefront as dramatists, there had been going on a decay of true comedy. The end of the seventeenth century had seen the excesses of the Restoration comedy patronised by the court and the nobility. Later with the birth of the eighteenth century, political and socio-economic factors started eating into the vitals of the patrons of this artificial comedy

and the result was its consistent degeneration. It is necessary to understand what this Restoration comedy was like, before we can understand the reaction to it.

The downfall of the Puritans with the death of Cromwell and the Restoration of Charles II brought to the English public a unique opportunity for expressing the merry instinct held long in check by them. The king himself was the patron-in-chief and his court the centre of dramatic performance and the allied amusements. The fashions in manner, dress and taste were imported from France and Spain, since the king himself and many of his courtiers had lived in France for a long time. Predominant in the court and nobility now were an aristocratic profligacy, refined manners, witty conversation, license, unbound gaiety, an artificial code of conduct and honour, pair maidens, immorality and intrigues of a thousand kinds. All this the Restoration comedy reflected and very often it even drifted to grossly indecent expressions and scenes. Neither the society nor its mouthpiece the playwrights kept to the canons of shame and morality.

In the first wake of this wave came Dryden with his *The Wild Gallant*. Later, Etherage and Wycherley held the stage for quite a long time with their witty comedies full of intrigues. Then came ·Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar with what is more commonly called the artificial comedy of manners. In them the literary effort is more pronounced and there is free use of irony, wit and satire against their generation.

With the end of the century and the coming to the throne of William and Mary, an all-round change in the prevailing conditions set in. Among these the most important was the rise of the middle class which affected things more than anything else. Their taste, their manners and their morality shaped the coming society and its literature. Queen Anne had no interest in the playhouse and George I did not know English at all. Consequently the court patronage was withdrawn from the dramatists and the theatre. The aristocracy had spent itself out and could not vie with the growing importance of the rich middle classes. So the actors and playwrights now depended directly upon the public for patronage. The nobility needed money and looked to the merchant class for it ; the merchant class felt happy in their association with the

high-born noblemen. As the two classes came together the merchant class also imbibed, to some extent, the vices of the aristocracy while retaining their puritanical conscience. The more powerful influence of the middle class however, prevailed in the end and their sentimental morality came to be reflected in what is known as the sentimental comedy.

There was a general downfall in the standards of the English comedy now and the middle class audience dictated terms. The degeneration of comedy and the dictatorship of the audience were also brought about by the monopolisation of the production of plays by only two theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Legally, the spoken drama could be presented only at these two theatres. As more and more common people thronged to these theatres, their size was increased and the result inevitably was that "subtle acting was impossible" and "the hero and the heroine had to roar to galleries far distant from them." The aristocracy kept away and enjoyed the Italian opera or other musical entertainments as a proof of their refinement. The dramatist had to keep in mind the tastes and needs of the mob which often became uproarious and even riotous if not catered to.

The middle class morality had started asserting itself right from 1698 when Jeremy Collier, conscious of the Restoration comedian's attack upon it, had written *A short view of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage*. By the first and the second decade of the eighteenth century, the vindication of the middle class morality in life and literature was complete. Sentimentalism grew fast in comedy ; farce and forced pity replaced free intellectual laughter. Allardyce Nicoll distinguishing between true and false sentimentalism thus remarks : "In its weaker form, sentimentalism implies an unmanly pity, a lack of strength and sometimes a certain puritanical hypocrisy ....But sentimentalism can mean, and did mean, more than this. Steele's hatred of duelling and his belief in matrimonial fidelity were sentimental, but they implied true courage.........Rousseau too was sentimental, but with him sentimentalism denotes humanitarianism, and sometimes revolutionary aims. Thus there were these three kinds of sentimentalism, the false one in most of the dramatists, the

one implying thought and reflection in Steele and the humanitarian one in Mrs. Inchbald.

Another very important thing about sentimentalism is its influence both on the good and the bad side. While the spirit of true laughter was banished from the stage, the new things brought in were "a new humanitarianism, a recognition of social problems and an endeavour to make the theatre express" these problems in its own way. The political and the religious problems of the day so much occupied the minds of the people that they were inevitably led to the considerations of the social problems also. In comedy, this effort was made, though with a false hypocrisy. The characters were still the sinners and the happy-go-lucky licentious people, but there were always sudden conversions and the sinner turned saint. The moral ending given, everything else was all right, because the ending satisfied the bourgeoisie conscience and the thirst for pleasure was quenched by the sins, intrigues and the loose dialogue of the earlier scenes. Realism also was gone. Men and women as they moved around were not painted, the new characters were only abstractions as envisaged by the mind of the sentimental comedy writers.

This moralising note started with Cibber's *The Careless Husband*, but found its artistic expression in Steele's *The Funeral* and *The Conscious Lovers*. In the hands of the later sentimental playwrights, it became a "literature capable of vast absurdities", containing mostly hypocritical and nonsense moralisings. Hugh Kelly and Richards Cumberland wrote many sentimental comedies that were quite popular on the stage. A spirit of farce and satire differentiated Fielding, Colman and Foote from these and there were also quite a few minor dramatists trying to keep alive the true witty spirit of the Restoration comedy though not with much success. Thus the victory of the sentimental comedy was complete and final. "In place of laughter, tears ; in place of intrigues, melodramatic and distressing situations ; in place of rogues and gllants and witty damsels, pathetic heroines, serious lovers and honest servants—this is what we discover in the typical sentimental drama of the late eighteenth century.

It was against this misnomer of comedy that Goldsmith

and Sheridan took arms. There were minor protests also but since they came from the lesser talents, they were ineffective. Goldsmith and Sheridan rehabilitated laughter in comedy. They had a common cause in demolishing the edifice of the sentimental comedy, but what they individually constructed had different intrinsic merits.

5. Reaction of Goldsmith and Sheridan to the Sentimental Comedy.

Goldsmith :

Goldsmith gave expression to his dislike of the contemporary comedy and its presentation as early as 1759, in his essay on *The Present State of Politic Learning* and later in the letter No. 79 of the *Citizen of the World*, in his essay on *Sentimental Comedy* and his two plays : *The Good Natured Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773). In the letter No. 79 of the *Citizen of the World* he wrote :

"They tell me here, that people frequent the theatre in order to be instructed as well as amused. I smile to hear the assertion. If I ever go to one of their playhouses, what with trumpets, hallooing behind the stage, and bawling upon it, I am quite dizzy before the performance is over. If I enter the house with any sentiments in my head, I am sure to have none going away......" In 1768 he brought his comedy, *The Good Natured Man* as an attack upon the sentimental style of Kelly and Cumberland. The play was not very successful and the audience protested against the 'low' scenes, deliberately introduced by Goldsmith to caricature the gentility and false humane sentiments of the age. He said, 'he believed' "that too much refinement will not banish humour and character from ours, as it has already now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humour and Moliere from the stage but it has banished all spectators too."

In 1772, Goldsmith published his *Essay on the Theatre* or *A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy*. In it he attacks the Sentimental Comedy for therein "the virtues of private life are exhibited, rather than the vices exposed ; and the distresses rather than the faults of mankind make our interest in the piece......In these plays almost all

the characters are good, and exceedingly generous ; they are lavish enough in their 'tin', money on the stage ; and though they want humour, have abundance of sentiment and feeling. If they happen to have faults or foibles, the spectator is taught, not only to pardon but to applaud them, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts ; so that folly instead of being ridiculed, is commended and the comedy aims at touching our passions without the power of being truly pathetic." Goldsmith then employs bitter satire to expose the hypocrisy of this comedy and while laughing in his sleeves remarks—"But there is one argument in favour of sentimental comedy, which will keep it on the stage, in spite of all that can be said against it. It is, of all others, the most easily written. Those abilities, that can hammer out a novel, are fully sufficient for the production of a sentimental comedy. It is only sufficient to raise the characters a little ; to deck out the hero with a riband, or give heroine a title, then to put an insipid dialogue —without character or humour, into their mouths, give them mighty good hearts, very fine clothes, furnish a new set of scenes, make a pathetic scene or two—with a sprinkling of tender melancholy conversation through the whole and there is, no doubt but all the ladies will cry, and all the gentlemen applaud."

Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* with its true comic spirit and popularity did much to change the taste of the people, for it had a "peculiar union of intellect and emotion", the spirit of Shakespeare's romantic comedy combined with the saner qualities of the comedy of manners. Of the reaction to sentimental comedy this was the finest flower.

Sheridan :

The reaction to the 'genteel' comedy set afoot by Goldsmith was furthered with greater vigour by Sheridan. His protest can be seen in all the three important plays by him, viz. *The Rivals*, *The School for Scandal*, and *The Critic*.

What could be a more forceful and direct protest against the sentimental muse than one in the second Prologue to *The Rivals*, where pointing to the figure of Comedy he exclaims :

Look on this form,—where Humour, quaint and sly,
Dimples the cheek, and points the beaming eye ;
Where gay Invention seems to boast its wiles,
In amorous hint, and half triumphant smiles ;
Such a goddess of Comedy is not meant to be slighted by
Being avowed to the purpose of moralising in the theatres—
Look on her well—does she seem form'd to teach ?
Should you expect to hear this lady preach ?
Is gray experience suited to her youth ?
Do solemn sentiments become her mouth ?

Then he uses rhetoric and satire to assert categorically that he would not allow the true goddess to be replaced by the false one.

Must we displace her ? And instead advance,
The goddess of the woeful countenance—
The Sentimental Muse ! . . . .
. . . .
. . . too chaste to look like flesh and blood etc.

As Jane Austen satirized later the sentimental heroine in her novels so did Sheridan satirize Lydia Languish, in *The Rivals*. She loves an 'ensign' rather than a 'general' and dreams of "one of the most sentimental elopements", with "so becoming a disguise ! so amiable a ladder of ropes ! conscious Moon............four horses ....Scotch parson etc." Her fondness for the circulating libraries ; her rebellion against the chaperon, 'the old tough aunt' ; her elaborate descriptions to Julia of what was "something like being in love" ; her fantastic ideas of the duties of a lover, are all intended as bitter satire on the popular sentimental style. She is—to borrow a phrase from Mrs. Malaprop—'the very pine-apple of sentimentality.'

The School for Scandal contains very witty satire of the sentimental strain in the character of Joseph Surface. He is a hypocrite with scores of pious sentiments that mask his real nature. "He is so habituated to the false gallop of sentiment that he gives sentiment free rein even when it is unnecessary." In Act I, Scene I we find him galloping with sentiment when Lady Sneerwell cuts him short :

Joseph Surface : "Poor Charles ! I'm sure, I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him ; for the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves—

Lady Sneerwell : O Lud ! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends."

Similarly in the famous Act IV, Scene III, Sir Peter Teazzle explains for Joseph Surface, 'He is a man of sentiment.—Well there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment,"—and the irony of the remark is soon discovered.

The conversation in Act V, Scene II between Rowley and Sir Oliver Surface is still more revealing—

Sir Oliver : Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Rowley : Ay, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

Sir Oliver : And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowley : It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliver : Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age !

All this is disguised satire against the hypocrisy of sentiments and morals.

The bitterest satire of the sentimental drama, however, comes in the play *The Critic* where the characters are rehearsing a tragedy. In the opening scene the script indicates about a character that he bursts into tears and exits. At this the conversation starts :

Dangle : (reading) Bursts into tears and exits—what, is this a Tragedy !

Sneer : No, that's a genteel Comedy, not a translation—only taken from the French ; it is written in a style which they have lately tried to run down ; the true sentimental and nothing ridiculous in it from the beginning to the end.

Mrs. Dangle : Well, if they had kept to that, I should not have

been such an enemy to the stage ; there was some edification to be got from those pieces, Mr. Sneer !

Sneer : I am quite of your opinion, Mr. Dangle ; the theatre, in proper hands, might certainly be made the school for morality ; but now, I am sorry to say it, people seem to go there principally for their entertainment.

What could be a more effective dig at this school for morality than this ?

6. Sentimental Elements in Goldsmith and Sheridan.

That there are sentimental elements found even in these two playwrights is a very significant point often overlooked. Goldsmith and Sheridan, although they were the stalwarts of anti-sentimental comedy, could not completely keep off the shackles of the prevailing air of sentimentalism. The force of sentimentality was strong, because the bourgeoisie class that represented sentimental morality formed the main section of the audience and could not be ignored. The very success of a piece on the stage depended on how much the pious sentiments of the patronizing public were tickled.

Goldsmith, when he wrote *The Good Natured Man*, had professed himself openly against the Kelly-Cumberland style, yet many of the speeches of Sir William and Honeywood in it would have without discredit graced a comedy by Cumberland. The modern reader, moreover, will find very little in it in which Goldsmith can be said to have departed from the sentimental strain. The deliberately introduced 'low' scenes were there, but they evoked a protest from the audience at its performance.

In Sheridan's *The Rivals*, the Julia-Faulkland episode is a glaring example of the imperceptible (or conscious) ? influence of the sentimental vein on this advocate of anti-sentimentalism. Faulkland is primarily a Jonsonian 'humour' character : the jealous husband, yet his phrasing is sentimental throughout. This might have helped in popularising the play, for it won from the critics such extravagant praise as "Faulkland, in most respects, is a new, and a very good character." ......or : "The character of Faulkland is touched with a delicate and masterly end." The speech of Julia at the end

of the play is couched in such sentimental jargon that it won her the eulogy : "Julia is an honour to the drama." The contemporary public could not have tolerated our laughing at these noble characters though we do so now. We can hardly excuse Sheridan for not being able to resist this influence.

7. Sheridan as a Dramatist.

Sheridan as a writer of comedies stands on a very high plane. He is decidedly the most important dramatist of the eighteenth century and judged even merely by the test of continued popularity, stands second only to Shakespeare. Besides those of Shakespeare, the three most popular plays of the English language have been *The Rivals*, *The School for Scandal* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, of these Sheridan shares two.

The fact that strikes one most in the career of Sheridan as a dramatist is, that he started writing at a very early age of twenty-three and finished at a not very ripe age of twenty-eight. The period of productivity in his case was a short duration of five years, that includes even the production of his minor plays. Among his important pieces the first one *The Rivals* was written in 1774 and the last one *The Critic* in 1779.

During this time he was immensely successful and popular as a dramatist. His was a meagre output but with it he earned enduring fame and his charm still lasts, both on the stage and in the closet. The edifice of his fame, rests on his three masterpieces, *The Rivals*, *The School for Scandal*, and *The Critic*.

There is meritorious variety also in his works. *St. Patrick's Day* is an entertaining farce in two acts although it has little literary achievements. In *The Duenna*, he tried his hand on a musical opera. Then his partiality for the Restoration comedy of manners led him to adapt Vanbrugh's *The Relapse* in three acts for the contemporary audience. But it is with *The Rivals* that he beat the Restoration dramatists. Combining farcical and sentimental elements with the proverbial Irish wit, this play became a unique flower of the comedy of manners minus its blemishes of grossness or immorality. Next came *The School for Scandal* shedding the weaknesses of the earlier pieces and becoming the best example of the witty, satiric play reflecting the social manners and the spirit of the age. In this he beat

his favourite master Congreve in his own stronghold. *The Critic* employed his favourite weapons of wit, fun and satire to castigate the verbose vanity of the contemporary writers and critics. In *The Critics* he surpassed all the previous attempts at burlesque writing, such as those of Buckingham and Fielding.

The great contribution of Sheridan as a dramatist is that with his above successful plays he revived the decaying drama of the age. When he came, the merits of the Restoration Comedy had declined and its grossness had increased ; the 'weeping' comedy had been reduced to a school for morals and in place of fun and laughter had come tears and artificial pathos. French and Spanish masters were being imitated blindly ; the Elizabethan masters were being adapted to suit the contemporary taste by cutting off the 'barbaric' portions from them ; critics thought it the be-all and the end-all of good comedy to put forth sinners, rogues and villains undergoing a miraculous change in the end, to satisfy the middle class morality. This was a sorry state of affairs. Goldsmith, at first, raised his voice against it but he was only "an elder, not a better, soldier" than Sheridan. Sheridan took to writing witty comedies as the duck takes to water. He rehabilitated wit, fun, gaity, laughter and mild satire to their respectable places in a comedy. Although he took inspiration from the Restoration dramatists, he perfected their merits of wit and fun without yielding to their licence and immorality. It was his achievement that earned him the place of pride among the English writers of comedy.

Sheridan, in his plays, lived up to his canons of the true muse of comedy. He successfully avoided the goddess of the woeful countenance, except of course succumbing to it for a little while in the Julia-Faulkland episode. He could fulfil the primary aim of the comedian—that of making an audience merry. In mirth-provoking scenes, witty dialogues, exposing of the follies and foibles of the age, satire without malice, and the lack of attempt at preaching and moralising, he attained, according to his tenets, the true spirit of comedy.

In plot-construction and characterization, the hand of the clever dramatist in Sheridan is everywhere discernible—"his

plot is so ingenious that each character is found in every possible variety of situation, and also, is so plausibly constructed that, if a moment's credence be given to their existence, the story seems to tell itself, so probable, so inevitable is the progress of events." In creating dramatic effectiveness he is very clever. He uses all sorts of devices in his armour for the purpose. Brilliant dialogue, scintillating wit, humour and exaggeration of character are his common methods. His characters usually lead a superficial life and have no depth, nor is there any attempt to analyse them psychologically. Their comic aspects are often heightened such as in Mrs. Malaprop and Bob Acres, to achieve a kind of theatricality or dramatic effect. Often the characters are constructed on the 'humour' pattern, *e.g.* Sir Anthony Absolute, and Faulkland: yet their distortion brings in them a subtle vitality which pins them down our minds. The characters are not much differentiated and all of them, even servants, speak the language of witty intellectuals.

His wit is at once his strength and his limitation. He cannot it do without it ; is the very life of his plays. Apart from the social manners of characters it is their wit that makes them akin to the characters in the Restoration comedy. It is this wit again that renders his dialogue brilliant and masterly. Such wit had not been seen on the stage since the days of Wycherley and Congreve. Dramatic situations in *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal* provide most of their entertainment and fun ; nevertheless without wit much of their charm would have gone. Even when the scenes are otherwise not very effective wit redeems them.

The comedies of Sheridan stand no comparison with those of Shakespeare. They do not reach the highest dramatic possibilities nor do they provide the 'criticism of life' or the profundities that lie behind the outer shell of manners and code of conduct. He has a discerning eye no doubt, but that eye touches only the surface, not the deep recesses of the human heart. Jealousy and vanity do not operate in his characters from within ; they are just used to lead them to ridiculous situations. In this regard we should look at Sheridan with indulgence for he never said that he aimed at profundity and

only if he were not trivial, he might have deserved being bracketed with Shakespeare.

It is this reason perhaps which led him to close his career as a dramatist so early. It needs a great ingenuity in the painter of manners to give variety to his pieces. Jane Austen fails in this and hence a certain amount of dullness is going through her novels at a stretch. Sheridan, also perhaps, was afraid of repeating himself and so he put a full-stop to his activity as a playwright. He was not a student of human nature, its variety and depth. Had he been so, he might have gone on. But it is futile criticism, to discuss what he never did or to guess what he would have done. Suffice it to say that within his range, his genius flowered into a beautiful rose that gave flavour to his age and to posterity. It is no mean achievement that he has been called the "Beaumarchais of the English stage" and has been ranked for a long time, second only to Shakespeare as a writer of comedies.

8—Sheridan's Contribution to English Comedy

After all that has been said above, there is little need to assert that Sheridan's contribution to English Comedy was great and vital and his place in the history of English Comedy is high and secure. He occupied the stage at a critical hour when either gross immorality or sentimental morality were eating into the vitals of the sacred muse of comedy. Brilliant drama had dwindled into mere farce, burlesque or sentimental nonsense to gain cheap popularity. He saved the comic muse from all this, vindicated her stand and brought to her real praise and worship. With wit and laughter, fun and frolic dramatic effectiveness and ingenuity he showed once more that in the barren heath of unproductive eighteenth century—or at most productive of little plants—he, along with Goldsmith, stood like two bunyan trees, great and wide and firm. As Saintsbury observes, in spite of the fact that "popularity and the profits of the theatre had steadily increased and the touch of discredit which once attached to writing for the stage had all but entirely disappeared is no plausible guess," could be made as the solution of the sudden collapse of the English drama. The puzzle would have been greater if the towering Goldsmith and Sheridan had not been there to fill the gap.

"Judged merely by the test of continued stage popularity", says Nettleton in his *English Drama of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, "Sheridan stands to-day in English drama second only to Shakespeare". On the first day of its production *The Rivals*, was booed and cat : called but when after clever changes it was reproduced, it got an unprecedented success and ran for seventy-five nights. There was no other dramatist of that time that enjoyed greater popularity than Sheridan, not even Goldsmith. The romantic halo that was associated with his figure by the youth of his age might have dimmed, but his charm remains to this day. Thus his place in the hearts of the lovers of comedy is safe.

It is but natural that a talented writer should be followed and imitated by the lesser talents of his age and by the posterity. It did happen so in the case of Sheridan. The lesser dramatists tried to write on his pattern but failed miserably. They had some talent, their plays were admired at times but no one could produce great drama. They just faded out. It is not quite true to suggest that Sheridan revived the comedy of manners but it would be nearer truth to suggest that he killed it by giving it such high standards that none else could reach it. The comedy of manners, for nearly a century, vanished from the world of creative drama.

9—SHERIDAN'S STYLE

Among the causes of Sheridan's success on the stage, and his appeal to generation after generation of readers, his brilliant language is not the least important. His sparkling wit is the very life of the forceful, humorous and piquant style, which we find universally in his works, whether they are farces or burlesques or comedies.

Much of his inspiration to adopt such a style came from the age in which he lived and sought to be popular. The 18th century had seen a phenomenal rise in English prose style; such great masters as Dryden, Addison, Steele, Swift, Johnson and Goldsmith contributing to it. The artificial manners of the Post-Restoration society, the rise of the political parties, acclaimed independence of the writer, and the popularity of the newspapers and magazines were some of the reasons that led the contemporary writers to develop to the

full such species of literature as satire and burlesque. The coffee-house parleys provided the intellectuals to vie with each other in wit and retorts.

In this atmosphere was young and sensitive Sheridan brought up. He imbibed quite early a capacity for witty repartees and verbal felicities. "While in Bath and London, Sheridan had frequented the circles of fashion, where the cult of wit and irony was sharpened into a disparaging hostility to the Puritanism of the middle class. In such surroundings he had breathed a belated remnant of the atmosphere of Restoration."

Walter Sichel, the famous biographer of Sheridan also testifies to it when he says: without question "Sheridan was the best conversationalist of a day when conversation was still an art ...... From boyhood upwards he was inventive, a born humorist as well as wit, to whom every hour supplied fresh material, and to none did the hours present more variegation. His early efforts at repartee were long remembered."

As a student of drama he was much interested in the Restoration dramatists. Wycherley, Congreve and Farquhar had learnt more from them than from the Elizabethan masters. He imbibed their impulse for satire, wit and irony and developed a clear, neat and forceful style under their guidance. This suited his purpose well in writing his plays. His language amused and the witty style so overwhelmed the audience that people forgot to blame him for improbabilities of plot, conventionalities of characterization or any other weakness. Without such a style his comedies would have been nowhere. It must also be remembered that his success as an orator also owes a lot to these qualities. He was always fresh and vigorous, humorous and witty in his style and it went well with the purpose it was employed for.

These qualities of style had got so much in Sheridan's blood that he couldn't successfully vary the speeches of his characters. He is accused of allowing his witticism indiscriminately, both to the high as well as low characters. The servants in *The Rivals*, Fag, Thomas and David, speak a language that one may not find commonly in the people much above their station. The criticism is justified to a great extent, and it would need a very

subtle judgement to be able to distinguish between the direct factual speeches of the servants and the facile, neat and elegant expression of the genteel people; though all of them might be equally witty.

Sheridan does, however, vary his style according to needs. The affectations of the "provincial woman Mrs. Malaprop", the sentimental effusions of Faulkland and Julia, the romantic fancies of Lydia and the vulgarism of low characters all show subtle shades and nuances of style that need a cautious reader to distinguish. A very good example of such variations can be found in the last speech of the play, spoken by the sentimental heroine Julia. The style has all the artificialities of the 18th century diction. It is full of artifice and verbosity and the sense is lost in a jumble of far-fetched metaphors. Another good example of his rising to the occasion in matters of style may be found in the intellectual duel between Capt. Absolute and his father, Sir Anthony. Sheridan here shows himself a perfect master of epigram and seems to have an inexhaustible source of wit and repartee. Both of them pay each other in his own coin, wit for wit, irony for irony, satire for satire and retort for retort. Whatever weaknesses might hinder the acceptance of greatness for the play, such intellectual feasts assure its continued popularity.

To sum up, one can do no better than quote the eulogy of Legouis and Cazamian: "With him, however, comedy regains, in addition to the shining beauty of form, almost all the ease of movement it had with a Congreve. Here the joy of a feast of the mind, in which satire speaks to the intelligence more than to the moral sense, suffices unto itself. It is fed by sallies of the most fertile verse; and a gift of style equal to that of the best classical writers secures for every line a quality of finished art."

ON THE RIVALS

1—The Social and Literary Background.

'*The Rivals*' was the first play written by Sheridan. In it he depicted a society which was primarily of the bourgeoisie, who had come into prominence after a lot of social changes had set in due to the decay of the Restoration aristocracy. Quite a good number of profligate young people, mostly from the rich landed gentry, had gathered round Charles II and the court had become a centre of their intrigues and amours. They had unsuccessfully tried to revive the old age of aristocratic supremacy but "they were too weak and too few in number to regain their influence without some sort of alliance with the new powerful merchant class. Whatever the superficial evidence to the contrary, the Restoration did mean such an alliance. . . . . . . The alliance between squire and trader held good until the beginning of 18th century by which time the landed gentry . . . . . did not need, or thought they did not need, the help of merchants and financiers . . . . . Thus the Cavaliers were back enjoying an Indian summer in political alliance with a class that would share none of their pleasures or recreations. A sense of irresponsibility, of unreality overtook the court and its hangers-on. Below the surface respectable citizens were carrying on trade and making money: on the top the returned exiles amused themselves by trying to recreate a lost world. There was thus something bogus about the Restoration courtliness; it was not so much the product of the cultured leisure of the governing class as a self-conscious attempt to create a society of gallantry and fashion . . . . .

It is not then at all surprising that the most social of all literary forms, the drama . . . . .should at this time have been at once more artificial and the more self-conscious product of

one class in society than it had been in the first half of the century. In tragedy we have the Heroic Play, rhetorical, bombastic, preposterous. Here the romantic courtly love tradition that descended from the Middle Ages reached its *reductio ad absurdum* . . . . . In Restoration comedy we have a species that has become a by-word in textbooks on literature for the flippant and cynical treatment of social problems. In tragedy the dramatist escaped from life : in comedy he remained in the society of his day but refused to treat it seriously.

"The aristocracy freed from the threat of 'levellers' and equalitarian doctrines in politics and religion, were anxious to make their own lives distinguished for 'elegance' and sophistication. They had to be different from the respectable bourgeoisie whose habits they disliked and whose growing powers they feared. But the aristocracy were no longer a genuine class at all ; they were a hand-over from an earlier order, and had lost their integrity and function in society; the real rulers of which were coming to be a plutocracy embracing the old upper and the middle classes. So the attempt to produce a new aristocratic literature failed conspicuously . . . . . The society Congreve (1670-1729) paints is already passing away ; wit and gallantry and cynical irony have become literary fashions and the world described becomes an ideal world—it is, in a way, a wishfulfilment world for the wits of time . . . .

One has no sooner mentioned a bourgeois ascendancy over literature and society that emerged in the eighteenth century than another aspect of the contemporary scene presents itself. Was not the aristocratic principle still dormant? Parliament was controlled by the aristocratic landowners, the government was oligarchic, and not in a real sense democratic. The bourgeoisie had no political power. In a sense it is true that the aristocratic principle was dominant in the 18th century. But there was no firm line drawn between the middle and the upper classes. The ruling class was not a permanently fixed body, but flexible and ever-changing. There was no aristocracy of blood but only of social and political power. Aristocratic sentiment was still very strong, aristocratic forms were kept up, but behind everything lay the 'cash nexus'. Further, it must be remembered that bourgeoisie were quite willing to leave the purely political power in the hands of an oligarchy provided they wero guaran-

teed freedom and security to carry on their economic activities. . . . . . .In literature the power of the bourgeoisie can be seen more simply and more directly. The periodical essay, the novel, the moralising and didactic verse of the middle of the century, ...the domestic drama of George Lillo and Edward Moore, the comedy of Goldsmith and Sheridan and the sentimental drama of their dull contemporaries, are all, in different ways, expressions of the bourgeois outlook. Sheridan, perhaps with his drawing-room wit and irony, preserves as much of the aristocratic as of the middle class tradition, but such philosophy as there is at the basis of his work consists in a vaguely optimistic trust in human nature guarateeing its own morality which is another side of the bourgeois doctrine of *laissez faire.*" (David Daiches : *Literature and Society*).

In the Restoration society the comedies that had flourished were comedies of manners. The manners they painted were those of the aristocracy. Their characters were under the discipline of an accepted moral and social code of conduct rather than were shown as human beings giving vent to their natural feelings. The other remarkable thing about this literature was the moral profligacy, and debauchery of the contemporary society reflected in it.

As a reaction to aristocracy came the middle class ascendancy in everything. In literature the Sentimental Comedy showed that change. The bourgeoisie's concern were morals not manners and so even if there were vices and evil characters shown on the stage the characters having them were suddenly transformed in the end into perfectly moral and good beings. This morality was taken to nonsensical limits and in place of genuine laughter, the aim of comedy became to depict sentimental pathos, forced tears and hypocritical sentiments.

In this literary background as a reaction to this type of comedy, Goldsmith's and Sheridan's comedies came to be written among which '*The Rivals*' achieved no mean fame.

(Also see General Introduction on the Author :
Sections 4, 5 eral and 6).

The Date of Composition and Production.

In November 1774, when Sheridan had just completed his twenty-three years of age, he informed his father-in-law, Linley that he had hurriedly written a drama by request of Mr. Harris, the Covent Garden manager. He hoped that in a few days it would actually be in rehearsal at Covent Garden Theatre. This is the earliest authentic information about the date of composition of *The Rivals* available to us.

The night of Tuesday, January 17, 1775, saw the first performance of Sheridan's *The Rivals* at Covent Garden Theatre. It was announced anonymously and succeeded by "a new pastoral mosque and a pantomime (interspersed) called *The Druids*." It was a complete failure and the audience and the critics alike came hard on the playwright. The audience hissed its disapproval and the critics damned the play. As Walter Sichel puts it : "blemishes—length, exuberance, and drawn-out sentiment—were fair game, but its very beauties were blamed and belittled as second-hand. One of the journals, it is true, owned that in the very imperfections might be traced 'the man of genius, the gentleman and the scholar' . . . but on the whole nothing would content them. It was all a bungle and the piece was voted 'insufferably tedious'."

The one cause of this dismal reception of the play was the incompetent acting of many players. Quick, the lightest of the comedians, played Acres, a part which "betrayed him into farce." Miss Barsanti, who played Lydia Languish was warned that she was "a mere mimic," and Shuter (Sir Anthony Absolute) forgot his words too very often. The worst offender, however, was Lee, who acted Sir Lucius. His acting was declared to be 'an affront to commonsense.. . .and far from giving the manners of our brave and worthy neighbours (the Irish)." The next day his part was transferred to Clinch and Sheridan "who in despair had thought of throwing the piece overboard, was induced by Harris, the manager, to withdraw it for revision."

There was yet another reason for this initial failure. "I see where the fault was", wrote the disappointed dramatist to his wife ; "the play was too long, and the parts were badly

cast." The inordinate length was chiefly offensive in the already dull scenes of Julia-Faulkland episode.

With a new actor Clinch taking the part of Sir Lucius and the Julia-Faulkland scenes pruned, the revised version of *The Rivals* appeared eleven days after its first performance, on the evening of Saturday, January 28, 1775, and proved a great success. The journals changed their tone and commendatory verses started appearing in them. The play continued for over fifteen nights at a stretch, which was an unusual success for any play at that time. Sheridan's dramatic reputation was firmly established, he was acclaimed the best comedy writer of the time, and he made both money and fame in abundance. The play has since then enjoyed unabated popularity.

It is easy to hint at the causes of this unforeseen success. There was an utter lack of the true comic spirit in the sentimental comedy in vogue in those days. Instead of mirth and laughter they were replete with sentimental pathos and forced tears. Tne pious sentiments were too oppressive and the theatre-goer instead of coming out of the theatre refreshed, came out with a woeful countenance. *The Rivals* satisfied the hunger of the audience for the true delightful Comedy, with its gaiety and humour, wit and intellectual acrobatics and packed action and sparkling dialogues. These qualities have established for good, its favourable reception by the audience in the theatre, as well as by the reader in his arm-chair.

3. Its Sources : The Problem of Originality and Autobiographical Element.

Sheridan is accused of plagiarism in the matters of his characters and scenes in *The Rivals*. Even the material of the main plot is said to have been derived from his personal life and the background of the drama from his knowledge of the fashionable town of Bath. There is much truth in these statements as he himself admits in his Preface :

"Faded ideas float in the fancy like half-forgotten dreams; and the imagination in its fullest enjoyments becomes suspicious of its offspring, and doubts whether it has created or adopted."

Thus Sheridan undoubtedly *was* indebted to the earlier dramatists and even novelists. But what of that ? Even the greatest dramatist of the language, Shakespeare borrowed extensively from earlier writers. The point to consider is whether he assimilated and made his own the material he borrowed ? Shakespeare always did ; so did Sheridan.

There are certain aspects of the main plot which run parallel to certain happenings in the life of Sheridan himself, and so he very conveniently and legitimately borrowed them from himself. The heroine of the piece, Lydia Languish has a craze to elope with Ensign Beverley. Her lover, Capt. Absolute gets involved in two duels although they do not come off. Lydia dreams of a secret marriage away from Bath. These details tally with what happened in the love affair of Sheridan and Miss Elizabeth Linley—the beautiful Maid of Bath. She did elope with Sheridan and their marriage was secretly solemnised at the church at Calais, where Sheridan had escorted her. On their return Sheridan had to fight two duels with a rival, Matthews, in the second of which he was much wounded. The conduct of Matthews, it is said, in the first duel was such "as would have done credit to Bob Acres": Sir Anthony Absolute, the father of Capt. Absolute in the play bears many similarities to Sheridan's own father. While Sheridan was wooing Miss Linley, she was being addressed, among others, by one Mr. Long also ; but he was so generous that at the personal appeal of Miss Linley, he not only withdrew his suit but also settled asum of £3000 upon her. This fact might have led Sheridan to put into the mouth of his heroine, Lydia Languish, the remark, "I have heard of girls persecuted as I am, who have appealed in behalf of their favoured lover to the generosity of his rival." (Act III, Sc. III, ll. 140—42.)

But all that has been suggested above as the material borrowed for the main plot is not enough to build a play. It could have only suggested the line on which to build. Also, the above incidents and characters of his hero and heroine were not new. They were stock situations and stock characters, being freely used by many other writers. Even if we accept that Sheridan did write of his personal life's experience, where is the harm in it ?

The characters in *The Rivals* do have many ancestors in the works earlier to Sheridan's. He borrowed freely from whatever he read and thought would suit his purpose. Since he was writing on the lines of the comedy of humours of Ben Jonson and the Restoration comedy of manners, he named his characters in that fashion. Most of his characters are named by the 'humour' they represent—Sir Anthony Absolute has the absolute temper; Lydia Languish is the typical languishing beauty, luxuriating in idle dreams; Sir Lucius O'Trigger's fingers are always on the trigger of his revolver to shoot his adversary and Mrs. Malaprop (Mal—a—propos) glorifies herself in the inappropriate use of words. Bob Acres, the foolish country gentleman, aping the city fashions and providing humour with his *oath referential*, is also a stock character. Likewise the sentimental lover (Faulkland) was quite common in the contemporary comedy.

Similarly about the situations. The young lovers rebelling against their parents (as do both Lydia and Capt. Absolute) the overbearing father threatening to disinherit his son if he does not obey him (Sir Anthony *vs*. Capt. Absolute); the old widow-guardian working as a chaperon, intercepting letters of her ward and herself seeking a lover (as does Mrs. Malaprop); jealous lovers doubting their beloved's sincerity (as does Faulkland of Julia), and clever servants betraying their masters (as do Fag and Lucy), are all stock situations and can be traced in many of the Restoration comedies. In this case, again, the most that we can say is that Sheridan's genius was not inventive. He fell in with a tradition and used it to his advantage and purpose. But even that is no discredit to him by any means.

For the background of *The Rivals*, Sheridan depended upon his knowledge of the life of Bath. He had lived there along with his father, who was running a school of oratory there. As a boy of nineteen, he moved freely in the town and saw it from close quarters. The fashions; the places for taking bath and mineral waters; the North and South Parades for evening walk; the circulating libraries; the intriguing lovers (he himself one of them); the duellists (again he, too); elopements (his own with Miss Linley)—all these find a place in *The Rivals* and provide a correct picture of Bath, used as the

background of the play. Specific references to the life of Bath have been put in the mouths of the different characters in the play and they are very apt and timely references too. The borrowing of details for the background has thus given a local colour and a realistic touch to the play, which is no blemish but an achievement.

Now let us consider the specific borrowings of characters and their names ; certain situations and a whole scene. Mrs. Malaprop, the most remembered character of *The Rivals*, can trace back her pedigree to Shakespeare's Dogberry and Verghese in *Much Ado About Nothing.* They are two foolish constables flattering themselves for their knowledge and producing a lot of laughter with their misuse of words. Mrs. Malaprop has also been found very similar to Mrs. Slipslop in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* and to Mrs. Winifred Jenkins in Smollets' *Humphrey Clinker.* She also owes something to Mrs Hiedelberg in Colman and Garrick's comedy *The Clandestine Marriage.* Some say that she has been bodily lifted from his mother's play, *A Journey to Bath* ; because in this play there are certain inappropriate uses of words by Mrs. Tryport, which have, exactly in the same manner, been used by Mrs. Malaprop. In Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker* there is a Matthews Bramble who might have suggested Sheridan's Capt. Absolute. Lydia Languish has parallels to her character in Colman's *Polly Honey Combe*, the feminine reader of sentimental romances and Biddy Tipkin in Steele's *Tender Husband.* Her name seems to have come from Lydia Bramble again in Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker.* The Julia-Faulkland episode has similarities with the descriptions in a ballad *Nutbrown Maid*, collected in Bishop Percy's *Reliques*, and also with an episode in Smollett's *Pererine Pickle.* Mrs. Honeycombe referred earlier also had some influence on the character of Sir Anthony Bob Acres' attempts to learnt he French dances are similar to those of Mockmode's in Farquhar's *Love and a Bottle* and he might have been modelled on John Quick known as "the retired Diocletion of Islington". Not only a detail or two in Bob Acres' and Sir Lucius' character but the whole scene in which the former is incited by the latter to fight a duel with Capt. Absolute, has been borrowed from a scene in Shakespeare's *The Twelfth Night,* where the foolish Sir Andrew

Aguecheek is similarly incited by Sir Toby Belch and the duel is interrupted as it is interrupted in *The Rivals* also.

Thus the above are a few charges of plagiarism of which the critics have documentary proof. Forgetting that Sheridan was barely twenty-three when he wrote this play, they came hard upon him. George Sampson goes even so far as to assert that 'probably every detail of *The Rivals* appeared in some other play." What if it did? In Sheridan's defence, one would do well to echo Balston's argument : "Another charge against Sheridan is that all his plagiarism and the accusation has been supported by a hundred pieces of evidence. The defence, however, is now as familiar as it is conclusive. A work of art is not, any more than a human being or a vegetable, a spontaneous growth unconditioned by the time and place and circumstances of its creation. It is born with a literary ancestry, and it can escape not more easily or completely from its ancestral traditions than a man from the tradition of his family. It no more detracts from Sheridan's genius to point out resemblances to Wycherley or Congreve than it would smirch the reputation of a peer to bear a likeness to the founder of his family. And even if the resemblance is something more than the outcome of tradition, the comparative study of literature has shown that direct borrowing, so far from being impossible has given us some of its finest passages. It required but a few touches to transform an extract from a prose translation of Plutarch into the magnificent description of the barge of Cleopatra—as Shakespearian a passage as any in the plays. With regard to Sheridan as to Shakespeare, the only legitimate question is whether he assimilated what he borrowed and in both cases the answer is unhesitating. The plays of Sheridan are throughout essentially and characteristically the work of Sheridan. Even Mrs. Malaprop, whom he lifted almost bodily from his mother's unpublished play, *A Journey to Bath*, has become part and parcel of his work. His real originality lies in the completeness and individuality of his work without any reference to its sources or its predecessors ; and individuality in works of art, as in human beings, is seen in the strength and clearness of the impressions they make on others. If an artist has welded his material into a complete

organic whole in which nothing is superfluous or lacking, he has achieved a work of art."

Thus it would be equally futile to call *The Rivals* an autobiographical piece. There are certainly some parallel things in the play, but there are greater differences too. Whereas Sheridan eloped with Miss Linley, Capt. Absolute does not with Lydia. The duels in the play do not materialize as they did in Sheridan's actual life. Even if there are certain details in the play directly borrowed from his own life, Sheridan was helpless in the matter as all artists are. After all a writer cannot but use the material of which he has the first-hand knowledge, may it be of the happenings of his own life or of the lives of those he mixes with. Thus to call *The Rivals* an autobiographical piece is neither an adverse criticism nor a statement of fact.

4. Its Title.

This comedy of intrigues has very befitting title, because almost all intrigues in it refer to the of rivalry different characters for winning their prize. The title thus directly refers to the central theme as well as the minor themes that make up the play. At its face it seems a comical title but in essence it is deeply satirical.

The main rivals in the play, primarily hinted by the title, are of course, one and the same person—Capt. Absolute and his other fictitious self-Ensign Beverley. Capt. Absoulte has to assume the personality of a poor sub-lieutenant to tickle the humour of Lydia Languish, the romantic heroine, who is, according to Fag, "a lady of a very singular taste ; a lady who likes him better as a half-pay ensign than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a year." Lydia is not allowed to see her Beverley by her chaperon Mrs. Malaprop, who intercepts her correspondence with him with the help of Lucy. Later she brings with the help of Sir Anthony, his son Capt. Absolute as a suitor to Lydia and so a rival to Ensign Beverley is provided. Thus he is at the same time, in Lydia's eyes, the two rivals—the adored Beverley and the detested Capt. Absolute. This main problem of rivalry is, however, solved when the identity of Capt. Absolute is discovered by all. After that nothing much remains to be done than to bring Lydia round

to accept Capt. Absolute in his own person, and his rivalry with Beverley in the main plot ends.

Then there are other rivals too, Bob Acres vs. Ensign Beverley and Sir Lucius O' Trigger vs. Capt. Absolute are the avowed duels to be fought. Acres was encouraged by Mrs. Malaprop to become the suitor of Lydia and thus feels rivalry with Beverley. Sir Lucius has been continuing his correspondence with 'Delia' whom he took to be niece Lydia and not the aunt Mrs. Malaprop as she really was and so he is opposed to Lydia's suitor, Capt. Absolute. Bob Acres' rivalry with Capt. Absolute ends as soon as he comes to know his real identity and withdraws his claim to Lydia; Sir Lucius also, when he discovers his mistake of confusing Delia with Lydia, remains no more a rival of Capt. Absolute.

Then there are imaginary rivals also, in the mind of Faulkland who is foolishly jealous of them and thus not only prepares his bitter cup for himself but also tortures Julia. He too is purged of his suspicious nature in the end.

The title can also be taken as satirizing the husbands in general that are suspicious of unknown rivals and the foolishly romantic girls that surround themselves with contending rivals and find pleasure in them.

5. 'The Rivals' as a Comedy,

'The Rivals' paints a carefree society where people have nothing more serious to worry about than flirtations and frivolity. Their intrigues are the most profound occupations of their lives ; may he be a Capt. Absolute of the King's Army ; Lydia Languish, the romantic heroine or the muddle-headed Mrs. Malaprop. The true spirit of comedy, fun and frolic, humour and wit and even boisterous laughter reign supreme in this play. Some of the scenes in it even verge on the farcical.

Primarily the spirit of *The Rivals* was reactionary. The play was written as a reaction against the sentimental comedy prevailing in the age, in which manners were not cared for so much as the morals. The squeamish but unrefined middle class had an abhorrence of anything low ; the vice might be represented on the stage but it had to be redeemed somehow

before the play ended. Sentimental moralisings, forced pathos and false emotionalism were thought inevitable in works of art and the true spirit of laughter was crushed out. It was against all this that Sheridan rebelled in writing *The Rivals* (See Gen. Intro. on the Author : Section 5 . . . . . .), and produced a comedy full of wit, laughter and mirth-provoking scenes. "The strength of his dramatic talent lay in wit ; wit is the sworn enemy of sentimentality and cannot live side by side with it, at least in a play."

Although *The Rivals* was written as a reaction to the sentimental comedy, it could not rid itself totally of the prevailing sentimentality of the age. According to Saintsbury, "*The Rivals* is an artificial comedy, inclining on one side to farce, and in the parts of Faulkland and Julia, to the sentimental." Thus the Faulkland-Julia episode has become a blemish in the play for it is saturated with the very elements Sheridan professed to discard. One may opine that the interlude of these two lovers is meant as a satiric portraiture of sentimentality, but there is nothing to doubt that it had not been taken seriously by the contemporary audience.

Although Sheridan's primary aim in the play was to amuse and not to preach morals, one may from here and there in the play pick up remarks that indicate Sheridan's social inclinations. With wit and mild satire he ridicules certain prevailing social vices of the day and only to that extent can we take him to have any social purpose in this work. He lends support to the cause of women's education that was developing as a movement in his times. He ridicules the sentimental husband's jealousy for imaginary lovers of his mistress in the character of Faulkland, satirizes romantic absurdity in Lydia and censures the pretentious woman parading her learning in Mrs. Malaprop. Similarly in Sir Anthony, Bob Acres and Sir Lucius also particular social evils are denounced.

The perpetual appeal of *The Rivals,* however, rests on its wit and humour, which most of all is the anti-sentimental element in the play. Brilliant dialogues, clever intriguing situations, and caricaturish characters produce this humour. Capt. Absolute courting Lydia in disguise and Mrs. Malaprop corresponding with Sir Lucius under a pseudonym, are quite

mirthful situations. The intellectual duel between Capt. Absolute and his father provides quite a feast of wit and Bob Acres being excited by Sir Lucius to fight is a scene farcical enough. Even the servants have a hand in entertaining the audience, while they vie with their masters in wit and lie to them mischievously.

The characters are mostly comic. Mrs. Malaprop, Bob Acres, Sir Anthony and Sir Lucius are comic in everything they say or do. Faulkland produces laughter by his caprices and absurd sentimentality. The characters, that do not render themselves ridiculous, also supply a taste of humour by their wit ; *e.g.*, Capt. Absolute. The servants do not lag behind in providing their part of fun, by aping the manners of their superiors. Sheridan provokes free laughter throughout the play and even when he hits, he does not hurt. In his satire there is no sting ; it only tickles and works as a corrective. "In Sheridan this gift of innocent ridicule and quick embodiment of the ludicrous without malice have risen to such heights of excellence as have given his nonsense a sort of immortality."

The dialogue of *The Rivals* has always been counted as one of its chief merits although Sheridan surpassed the achievement in his next play, *The School for Scandal*. His dialogue is brilliant and sparkling throughout and moves with an ease, smoothness and vivacity, that is the very life of the play, Wit was a prerogative of Sheridan since his very boyhood days and he imparts this quality to his characters so very often that "everyone, in this world of refined manners, is able to say something that is brilliant. Never for a moment does the sparkle disappear ; so that sometimes we are inclined to be surfeited with too much of these intellectual fireworks."

The charges of plagiarism and lack of profundity have too often been levied against *The Rivals*. As to the borrowings, Sheridan himself has admitted that he has freely adopted from his readings. "Faded ideas float in the fancy like half forgotten dreams," says Sheridan in his Preface, "and the imagination in its fullest enjoyments becomes suspicious of its offspring, and doubts whether it has created or adopted." Even if Sheridan did borrow some details he made them all his own, so much so

that they combine to be congenial to his purpose and contribute to the creation of the carefree atmosphere of the play. They never give the impression of having been thrust perforce and imparting the play a patched-up appearance. Absolute originality is not a fact but a fiction. Even the greatest authors do not have it.

Then there is the charge of triviality—that the play concentrates merely on the superficialities of human conduct. It was bound to be so. How could it be otherwise when the age in which Sheridan was born and brought up was also artificial and superficial? A writer should not be criticized for not writing beyond his range; rather it is his wisdom that he confines himself within the limits of his experience. Of course, in observing and depicting the mere surface of life and in not fathoming life's deep recesses, he missed the very greatness to which the artists aspire. Sheridan cannot be counted with Shakespeare or with any of the profound masters of art, but he remains a successful writer of comedies all the same.

6. The Rivals—as a Comedy of Manners.

The comedy of manners had its origin in Ben Jonson's comedy of humours. Jonson was a follower of the classical ideal of comedy using laughter as a corrective. For this purpose he invented the characters who had a dominant humour or eccentricity of their own and were mostly named by it. These particular oddities, he showed, led the characters to absurd behaviour and ludicrous situations rendering them susceptible to satire and being laughed at. This comedy represented not the qualities of an age but of humanity.

The Restoration dramatists revived this comedy representing the qualities of their immediate field. It differed from the earlier species in its lighter handling, unconcerned with morals, concrete and realistic portraiture of a particular age—the Restoration society, more intellectual treatment, urbanity, cynicism, depiction of acquired follies, treatment of artificial manners, sparkling wit, brilliant dialogues and an occasional impulse to venture even the painting of obscenity while describing the battle of sexes. It was called the comedy of manners bacause it did not aim at presenting the human nature but the manners of a particular society. The behaviour of man,

even if it is conditioned by certain circumstances, cannot be included under the term manners. Manners refer to the habits and behaviour which a set of people acquire in a particular society in a particular age. In this case the Restoration comedy sought to depict the manners of the contemporary aristocracy, with their elegance, fashion and vices that they sought to acquire, pomp and show, polished behaviour, all sorts of intrigues, gallantry, cultivation of wit and brilliant conversation ; pursuing of the fair sex and not a little immorality and lascivity. This comedy of manners did not attempt to dive deep into the profound problems of human soul, but gave a picture only of outer superficiliaties. It soon developed stock characters, set devices to handle the plot, and particular situations used by all. The characters were always the court people, the aristocratic youth, polished in behaviour, elegant in manners and brilliant in wit. The code of honour that they honoured, brought about frequent duels. Basest conspiracies and attempts at the chastity of women provided the interest of plot. Wit and fun prevailed in most of the scenes, where Lords and Ladies called on each other or had a social gathering for dinners and balls.

Sheridan's *The Rivals* is certainly a comedy of manners according to its general definition. It has many points in common with the Restoration comedy of manners while it differs from it considerably in many other aspects. It is such a comedy, because it depicts the manners of the contemporary eighteenth-century society. Of course it does so incorporating in it the changes in the social manners, since the Restoration. The political and economic upheavals in the country had brought the downfall of the profligate aristocracy and the rich middle class was gaining more power in the social, political and literary matters. On the one hand this middle class which mostly consisted of merchants was learning the vices and faults of the aristocracy, on the other the bourgeoisie conscience and hypocrisy did not let them tolerate the immorality and licence of the earlier age. *The Rivals* represents both these tendencies of his age. Sheridan's characters lead life of gaiety, lightheartedness and frivolity, seeking the fashions and pleasure-haunts of Bath. Almost all the characters are entangled in love-amours and have nothing more important to do than to pay

social visits, learn fashionable dances, devour romances from the circulating libraries and fight duels. The play attempts only a superficial portraiture of the manners of these idlers and does not seek the underlying psychological motives or base passions. The oddities of behaviour bring the characters into ludicrous situations and a lot of fun and laughter is the result. In plot construction and method of treatment it is very much like the artificial comedy of manners of the Restoration times. It hinges on intrigues and tricks like it, it has scintillating wit and brilliant dialogues like the comedies of Congreve and Wycherley, it is gay and amusing like most of the Restoration comedies and is mildly satirical though unconcerned with morals as good comedies mostly are. Sheridan manipulates his plots with the stock devices of the comedy of manners, the mistaken identity, the tyrannical parents, the rebellious young lovers etc. The improvisation is perfect and there are hardly any loose ends. The strength of Sheridan's play is exactly the same as that of the Restoration comedy writers, viz., the plot packed up with action and cleverly manipulated ; a universal brilliance of wit, and the smooth, gay and vivacious dialogue. Sheridan would never have succeeded in giving us the two of the best comedies of manners, namely *The School for Scandal* and *The Rivals* if he did not have the gift to write the sparkling dialogues bubbling with intellectual buoyancy.

Thus, although Sheridan's play is certainly an artificial comedy of manners modelled on the Restoration masters' works, it is much different from them also in the details of the changed times and in discarding many of the vices and weaknesses of the earlier type. It differs from the Restoration comedy also in inclining more towards a farce and in the sentimental elements it contains and could not escape. It has also been modified by the exaggerated humours of the Jonsonian type as most of the names of characters testify.

7. Whether a Farce or a Comedy.

A comedy may be defined as a play of light, entertaining and humorous nature, often using laughter as corrective of ordinary human follies and having a happy denouement. The oddities and the eccentricities of characters in it often land them on

the troubled shores of ludicrous situations. In a farce, however, the scenes and episodes are incessantly mirth-provoking and the light-hearted laughter does not allow anything beyond itself. A farce is a play of crude hilarity and gross exaggeration of men, manners and situations with the sole object of a laugh. It cares little for characterization which is subordinated to a plot of manipulated incidents.

Judged from above canons we find *The Rivals* possessing almost all the characteristics of a comedy. It is light-heartedly and humorously treated throughout and yet has a gentle satire that can be interpreted as a corrective. Although it deals with the artificial manners of the age and amuses us with the follies of Mrs. Malaprop, Bob Acres, Sir Lucius, Anthony etc., it also warns us against their foibles in an indirect manner. But as there is something of a farce in every great comedy, *The Rivals* also has *something* of a farce. It is not a farce ; at most we can call it farcical. Although the situations in it are artificially created, the characters are not mere puppets or automatons; nor is every scene in it so grossly hilarious as to turn it into a farce. It also satirizes the sentimentality of age which is none of the business of a farce.

It does lean to the farcical in many of its scenes. Although it amuses the audience throughout with its gaiety, fun and humour in the following scenes, the sense of laughter seems to be deliberately exaggerated and therefore verging on the farcical. In Act II Scene I the intellectual duel between Sir Anthony and his son render Sir Anthony utterly ridiculous and worthy to be laughed at. Then Capt. Absolute pushes aside his mischievous servant Fag, who in turn vents his anger upon the errand boy, thus ending the scene in a farcical vein. The scenes of Bob Acres being excited to fight a duel by Sir Lucius, and the braggart actually on the scene of duel showing his cowardice, are certainly worthy of a farce. Mrs. Malaprop, as remarked by a critic, "threatens to degenerate into a farcical character in many places without really ever turning to be so." There is incessant laughter enjoyed at her cost due to her inappropriate use of words. The scene where Capt. Absolute reads his own letter to Mrs. Malaprop while she frets and fumes at the writer, comes very near to farce. Similarly, the last scene of reconciliation which brings a happy end for everybody except

perhaps Mrs. Malaprop, has no less farcical elements than any other scene in the play.

It is due to these scenes and the similar ones interspersed throughout the play that Allardyce Nicoll condemns *The Rivals*. "About the whole play", says he, "breathes an atmosphere of farce, and although there is something of farce in every great comedy, this lower strain tends to weaken the general effect of Sheridan's work." Saintsbury, however, does not wholly subscribe to this view. That it is quite free from artificiality, says, nobody in his senses would maintain. But Sheridan has had the wit to give artificiality itself that touch of burlesquing sincere examples of it which saves everything. It must be from the lack of imagination, which cannot see the pretence at once of fairy tale and farce, that anybody can find fault with its plot and fail to discover in it the brilliance of *The School for Scandal*. The fact is that there is nothing else quite like *The Rivals*.

8. The Rivals : As a Drama of Situation and Intrigue.

Sheridan's models in writing *The Rivals* as has been already referred, were the Restoration masters of comedy. They wrote the artificial comedy of manners as is *The Rivals* also. Their works reflected honestly the idle and rich court society after the year of Restoration. A number of profligate nobility had assembled round the King Charles II, and were plotting and intriguing all the time to gain favour with the King or with the beautiful ladies around them. The Restoration comedy mostly based its plot upon the intrigues of this court life. It was a witty comedy in which characters and situations had to be manipulated in order to effect a satiric portraiture of them.

Sheridan's *The Rivals* is also a work in the same line. Its aim is to give a satiric picture of the artificial manners of the high society in his age, particularly of the Bath society. For this purpose Sheridan picks up his *Dramatis Personae* from among the 'flat' characters having humours of their own and obeying only their humours and the dictates of the dramatist. They show no development. The playwright manipulates his plot in order to bring them to certain funny situations and to make them behave in a pre-planned manner. They are not mere puppets but they are not free to develop either. The

plot is twisted and turned as the dramatist needs it without, of course, marring the sense of verisimilitude. Sheridan even observes the classical unities of time, place and action in the plot, which takes only five hours to finish.

As was natural in that society, the characters in *The Rivals* are very scheming and intriguing ones. Their intrigues set the dramatic action going and provide in a fair amount the quality of suspense which is the very life of the play. The characters are the stock-characters of comedy ; many of them are in the pursuit of their amour. Capt. Absolute, Bob Acres, Sir Lucius, Lydia, Julia, Faulkland and Mrs. Malaprop.........all do that. They are intriguing and plotting all the time to bring about the desired result. Sheridan had a perfect sense of dramatic effectivity and he manages his characters and plot through a series of very interesting, funny and effective situations, which bring the unfavourable complications in the love-affairs of the characters to a satisfving denouement. This can be easily illustrated by showing the various stages through which the plot develops.

In the very exposition, we are told of an intrigue, which Capt. Absolute has to effect, in order to win the love of capricious Lydia. Absolute courting Lydia not as a rich heir, but as a poor ensign, is an interesting situation fraught with immense possibilities of interesting development. A hint for another interesting situation immediately comes when we know that the hasty Sir Anthony Absolute has suddenly arrived in Bath to avoid another attack of gout. How will it be when the father and son meet ? It certainly comes to be a very enjoyable situation and another is added to it as soon as we learn that Sir Anthony Absolute proposes to marry his son to Lydia Languish with Mrs. Malaprop's consent. We know Lydia will neither marry with her aunt's consent, nor marry anyone else but Beverley. The suspense and the complication of the situation thus become very great.

A further intrigue is disclosed in which Mrs. Malaprop and Capt. Absolute conspire to win Lydia's favour, with the Captain in his own person. Sheridan piles upon it another very funny and interesting situation when Capt. Absolute faces Lydia, in the presence of his father and Mrs. Malaprop and can no more keep the illusion of being Beverley.

Similarly intriguing goes on elsewhere also, because Bob Acres, who was encouraged to address Lydia by Mrs. Malaprop, has since been dismissed by her. Sir Lucius, the bloodthirsty, pugnacious Irishman, eggs on Acres to fight a duel with Beverley. The situations in which Acres is now shown are very humorous and amusing. The intrigue of Sir Lucius in arranging a duel between Acres and Beverley and between himself and Capt. Absolute brings further suspense to the drama and gives a great stride to the plot. The whole thing now depends upon the result of these intrigues.

Two more interesting situations have been interwoven with these intrigues. One is the secret correspondence between Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Lucius, wherein the old lady has been conspiring to win over Sir Lucius in the name of Delia. The gallant Irishman has been given to understand that she is Lydia and he is thus facing a potential ludicrous situation. The other is the development in the sub-plot, the affair between Faulkland and Julia. This has developed through the interesting situation of Faulkland picking up a quarrel with Julia due to his suspicious nature. This complication also awaits to be resolved in the final scene.

The denouement provides one of the most interesting situations of the play to which the various characters of the play have been deliberately brought. All the intrigues are here unwoven and everyone comes out of the situation happy. The duellists are reconciled and the lovers get their reward except Mrs. Malaprop, who is still unprovided for. The whole plot has been a series of interesting situations and bold intrigues, manipulated to suit the dramatist's purpose. That is why the play has sometimes been criticised as a patched-up play.

The intrigues and situations managed by the dramatist according to his own will provide him a further opportunity of making his play brilliant, although it was already so with humour, wit, irony and suspense. Selected amusing situations are created to make the play more interesting. Similarly the complications of cleverly improvised intrigues certainly impart a thrill to the scenes. The manipulated situations also give Sheridan a chance to portray the artificial manners of the age as he desires, taking up the aspects that he thinks

will be most representative and dramatically effective. Thus, *The Rivals*, certainly is a play, mainly of situation and intrigue and is none the worse for it.

9. The Rivals as a Satire.

A comedy without humour and laughter will be no comedy at all, and in order to produce laughter an author has to invent certain ludicrous situations and comic characters. A little exaggeration in this attempt renders the comedy effective and so, comedy, by its very nature is said to go well with the satiric portraiture of life. *The Rivals* is an artificial comedy of manners, and the contemporary manners and men have been satirically painted in it. The characters, with their exaggerated humours, render themselves ridiculous enough.

The plot is also artificially managed for the purpose. The events of the plot do not rise from the interplay of human passions but from the whims and oddities of the characters. Since the manners represented are artificial, their exaggerated portraiture necessarily becomes satirical while the dramatist also all the time laughs in his sleeves.

Also the satiric bent of mind was quite common in the age in which Sheridan lived. From the gentle and mild satire of Addison to the bitter and pungent satire of Pope and Swift was a great variety of it, presented to that age of prose and reason. Almost all the authors, were they poets, essayists, dramatists or novelists, wrote in the satirical vein. Sheridan as a young man must have sensed the artificial manners of the age and attempts of the wits frequenting the coffee-houses to satirize it. He could not but develop a satiric outlook himself.

Although Goldsmith and Sheridan both had a common cause in attacking the Sentimental Comedy of the day, their sources of inspiration to write genuine comedy were different ; whereas Goldsmith went back to Shakespeare, Sheridan's models were the Restoration masters, who in their comedies were guided by a witty, humorous, and satirical portraiture of their society. Sheridan also writes in the same vein, is equally satirical in characterization, and witty and brilliant in his dialogues.

The nature of Sheridan's satire was never malicious, bitter or even pungent. He hits harder the follies and foibles of the age in *The School for Scandal* and *The Critic* than in *The Rivals*, but even there he is never bitter. He mostly laughs with his characters when they laugh at each other, and his attack is always gentle and inoffensive. His fun never hurts the feelings and his criticism is never aimed at anything else but the purging of the folly. Unless he had this capacity for satire he would never have been the orator, he came to be castigating Warren Hastings in the Parliament ; yet whatever the occasion, his satire always partook of his gentle nature and became mild.

Almost all the higher characters in *The Rivals* render themselves to a satiric interpretation except Capt. Absolute and to some extent Julia. Sir Anthony, Sir Lucius, Bob Acres, Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia Languish have some quality or the other that has been exaggerated for satiric purposes. Of these Mrs. Malaprop has been most consistently ridiculous. She is, as Herring remarks, "the provincial woman desperately trying to live up to the smartness of Bath." In the attempt, she tries to parade her learning and thinks that all the impressive words are at her beck and call ; she must have felt herself "the very queen of dictionary" as Sir Lucius puts it. The result was always a "derangement of epitaphs", and absurdity *par excellence*. Sheridan thus reveals the hollowness of the ladies pretending to be highly educated. It was her pride in her attainments that led her to repeat too very often that this or that does not become a young woman. She is subjected to further ridicule in her attempts at matrimony and disguised love with Sir Lucius. What affectionate satire did indeed Sheridan present, while wishing "a husband to Mrs. Malaprop," through Sir Anthony. Then there is the other female character Lydia Lauguish satirized for her silly dreams of a romantic elopement and the reading of romances with a religious ardour. Her desire to marry against her aunt's wishes, to lose her fortune, to marry ensign rather than a general, to elope with the help of a nice rope ladder, to see her name in print and to marry secretly beyond the borders of the country are all emphasized for the purpose of satire. The titles of the various romances brought for her suggest the nature of

refinement and taste which was common with the idle, fanciful and romantic girls in the eighteenth century.

Among the male characters Sir Anthony is the least ridiculed among the satirized ones. He is shown to have good breeding befitting his high position of a baronet. His refinement is indicated by his etiquette and behaviour towards the lady characters, particularly Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia. The quality exaggerated in him for satirical purposes is his authoritative attitude in season and out of season. His sweeping dogmatism even in the selection of a wife for his son takes him to absurd proportions when he suggests that the son will have to accept his choice even if he selected the ugliest woman on the earth! His fretting and fuming at his disobedient son entertains but at the same time enlightens. When Capt. Absolute dupes him in the garb of a penitent son, the moral of the satire is hinted and the audience takes the intended lesson. Sheridan had some experience of an imperious father in his own case when his father refused to pardon him for his elopement with Miss Linley. Sheridan disobeyed his father and married her.

Sir Lucius' portrait was taken to be so obviously satirical that the Irishmen in the town were soon complaining against Sheridan. Some Englishmen also showed sympathies with them admitting that the national character of the Irish had been ridiculed in Sir Lucius. Sheridan was wellnigh compelled to defend himself against this charge in his prose Preface declaring that he had no intention to belittle his glorious neighbours—the Irish. Actually, it is only an accident that Sir Lucius O'Trigger is Irish. The quality of a pugnacious bully, satirized in him is not a national prerogative; it may be a personal one. His very name signifies that he is ever-ready to fight with his finger on his trigger. The way he prepares Acres for the duel and picks up his quarrel with Capt. Absolute is not only a reflection upon his character but also unmasks the hollowness of duelling and the serious questions of honour or offence, involved in it.

The foolishness of the duellists is also indicated in the character of Bob Acres. He is a generous country-genlteman who would have got on well if he had confined himself to his

country life and its pleasures. He becomes susceptible to satire since he tries to raise himself to a fashionable town beau and win the love of a fashionable town beauty above his station. He is essentially a coward but has to agree to fight a duel since the town code of honour demands from him to take offence at a rival for his mistress' hand. His bragging and referential oaths persistently place him in an embarrassing anti-climax because he cannot muster up courage to fight. Satire in his case, as also in case of Mrs. Malaprop, makes him so ridiculous that he is in constant danger of dwindling into a farcical character.

Faulkland's case is somewhat different. He is a perfectly normal character preparing his bitter cup for himself only because of an odious flaw in him. He is foolishly jealous of the imaginary lovers of Julia and is suspicious that she does not love him as much as she should. Both are baseless sentiments, purely the products of his imagination. He is meant as a satire upon the sentimental lovers who flatter themselves that they have the most pure, pious and spiritual affection for their beloveds beacuse they are never happy in their absence. They do not know that their morbid melancholy arises out of their jealousy and suspicion. They mask their hypocrisy under their idealism and torment not only themselves but also those whom they love. Sheridan seems to be very enthusiastic—and rightly so—in ridiculing him through the person of Capt. Absolute.

Julia will have to be taken as excused from the attack of satire in the normal course. But in case we take her episode with Faulkland as a satire against the sentimental lovers, she may also be taken as a somewhat satirized portrait. Sheridan's public might have taken her sentimental effusions seriously but to the modern reader their long drawn metaphors and artificial diction, certainly seem to be deliberately chosen for the purpose of satire.

10. Bath in Sheridan's Time

Bath is a town on the river Avon in Somersetshire. It is an old health-resort famous for its mineral waters, which can cure many diseases. The place was known for its saline springs as early as the Roman days of first century B.C. The

Romans dignified the place as a resort for health and pleasure but after them it was totally neglected and lost its popularity. In the beginning of the eighteenth century continual wars made it difficult for the English people to frequent foreign health-spots to take their cures and so were forced to look to the English resorts for the purpose. Queen Anne, who very often remained ill, extended her patronage to the place for personal reasons and so a new era in the development of the town started. Apart from the invalids and the ailing people, pleasure-seekers also conducted themselves thither, although the amusements at Bath were still not well organised and regulated. Some new springs were discovered in 1758 and this resulted in opening a few more cheaper baths. The popularity of the town was slowly rising and even the upper middle class started frequenting the place. The town was very fortunate in getting Beau Nash at this opportune time, who brought about a complete transformation in the conditions of the place and effected many improvements and reforms. His organisational skill made the town perfect with all amenities not only for the sick but also for the fashionable and the pleasure-seeking, idle, rich class. It reached an unprecedented height of prosperity in that age, which it has hardly ever enjoyed since then.

The town was happily situated for the purpose of a health-resort. Beau Nash, when he assumed charge as the 'King of Bath,' put the pump-house under the supervision of a special officer who made all-out efforts for the convenience of the visitors. The new Bath (1758) was opened as The Duke of Kingston's Bath and here the charge for a visit was only one shilling as against five shillings at The King's Bath. Several new houses were constructed, the old pavements were repaired and the new ones built, the streets were paved, cleaned and lighted and many walks and gardens were newly opened. In one of such gardens, a band played and public breakfasts were served for very cheap rates. The New Assembly Rooms were built, where fashionable people assembled to take tea, chocolate, and dinner or to attend concerts and balls. The social etiquette of the place was strictly regulated. No gentleman could wear a sword, nor was gaming allowed to be high for fear of people indulging in fighting. Duels were strictly prohibited by law and if the news of one reached Beau Nash's

ears, he would at once get the parties arrested. The riding dress was not allowed in the Assembly and the ladies thought twice before appearing in the Rooms in an apron. No pleasures were allowed after 11 p. m. and the plays were given only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Balls were thought very fashionable and common and it is said that "No part of Europe can boast of anything equal to a Dressed Ball at the Public Rooms in this city." Circulating libraries were properly maintained where the people could go to read or wherefrom they could borrow books. The rules and regulations of the life in town were so strictly observed that they were not relaxed even for the Royalty. It was all this regularity and organisation which "was largely responsible for the raising of Bath to the position it occupied, and also to the raising of English life at the period to the most elegant and civilized point it has ever reached."

Thus the town became a favourite of all those who could afford to be there, men and women alike, may they be old or young. As the New Prose Bath Guide says, "we have seen here, within a few years, a set of People transform a parcel of wild Fields and woods, into a great city," and further boasts: "To the Gray and Youthful of both sexes, it is a Paradise; to Men in years, a most comfortable Retreat. To young Ladies it is, in a particular degree, the Place where they have the best opportunity to improve, and shew their persons to advantage, as well as to have their prudent conduct observed; there being no Place in England where they have more Liberty allowed them; and we are happy to observe that there is not any public place where that Liberty has been attended with fewer bad consequences."

The amusements at Bath were regular and varied. Whenever a stranger entered the town there was a loud pealing of bells and his name was announced. He was immediately asked to pay his subscriptions to the Assembly Rooms, Circulating Libraries, Coffee-houses etc. The bathing hours were between 6 and 9 a.m. and after that people assembled at the Pump House to drink the waters or for pleasure. Here hot water was supplied every morning and no one could get more than three glasses of it. While the water was being drunk the music was played and gossiping continued. From

there the ladies and gentlemen went to the coffee-houses where they read the morning papers and discussed the news or the scandals comfortably. Then came the turn of breakfast ; some repaired to their homes for it, and some to the Assembly houses with their guests invited for the purpose. Private concerts, visits to the libraries, attending of lectures on arts and science etc. were their other engagements till before dinner. In the afternoon a second visit was paid to the Pump House and from there either one went to public walks or to the Assembly House to take tea. At night there were balls, concerts and cards to be enjoyed or visits to be paid. This was routine of the diversions and amusements, further embellished by the happy gossip and scandal, which the fashionable town of Bath provided and the idle rich class enjoyed. Gay, fashionable youths, mawking romantic belles, fortune-hunting gentlemen, and the rebellious lovers eager for elopement, were a common sight in Bath because "all these things, according to the most credible chroniclers, were by no means infrequent accompaniments or sequel of an unguarded sojourn at the old jigging, card-playing, scandal-loving, pleasure-seeking city in the loop of the "soft glowing Avon."

11. Bath in 'The Rivals'

The Rivals is an artificial comedy of manners that represents the contemporary society particularly the life at Bath. All the characters in it come to Bath with one pretext or another and the scene in this comedy is laid in Bath in the atmosphere of affectation, intrigue, duelling and elopement with which Sheridan was familiar. The fact that he had had a personal experience of the high life in the town and had two duels and an elopement to his credit, lets Sheridan incorporate that atmosphere very successfully in the play. All the same the purpose of Sheridan in picturing the Bath society was not to deal with it for its own sake or merely for the sake of keeping it as a background, but also to represent it with a mild satire to hit at the social evils. This has naturally resulted in a somewhat exaggerated rendering of the vices and follies common in that life.

There are all sorts of references found in *The Rivals* about Bath and its society. Specific references to places and buildings,

to men and manners, to health houses and pleasure haunts, to rules and regulations, to fashions and dresses are interspersed throughout the play.

To begin with, topographical allusions have been made in the following cases. In Act I, Scene I, line 111 there is the reference to Gyde's Porch where Fag asks Thomas to meet him in the evening. At that time one Mr. Gyde kept the Lower Rooms which had "from their situation, some advantage of the upper, particularly a good garden and a retired walk on the margin of the river." Then in Act I, Scene II, line 2 Bull's circulating library has been mentioned which was situated opposite to Gyde's Porch and from where Lucy used to bring novels and romances for Lydia Languish. Then in Act II, Scene I, line 446—Cox's Museum is referred which was a part of an exhibition opened at Spring Gardens in 1773 and 1774. It exhibited 56 mechanical toys and curiosities. Reference also comes of the famous fashionable walks, the North Parade and the South Parade (Act II—Scene II, line 14), where most of the characters are shown as accidentally meeting for it was a place commonly frequented by most of the people. Bob Acres mentions the New Assembly Rooms (Act V—Scene III—line 293). These were in the Upper Town and were opened in 1771. There were also the Old Assembly Rooms in the Lower Town. It is in the New Rooms that Acres invited everybody to assemble for amusement in honour of the newly-engaged couples. Fag refers to the Pump-room (Act I—Scene I) where the ailing people went every morning to take mineral water. Sir Anthony in Act II—Scene I makes a reference to the Royal crescent, a prominent curved building of the town and Capt. Absolute proposes to fight Sir Lucius at the Spring Gardens (Act IV—Scene III—line 54). "Which considering their contiguity to so great a city are very delightful and afford, to all conditions of people, a very rational amusement." A special feature of these gardens were the public breakfasts, at which a band played. Earlier Sir Lucius had asked Bob Acres (Act III—Scene IV—line 134) to fight his duel with Beverley at King's Mead Fields, which were a secretive place for the purpose and were situated on the west side of the town. Similarly there are also the allusions to the Parade Coffee-house and the Abbey

at Bath ; the latter being the only place of the town where insanitary conditions prevailed.

Other references to the life at Bath in *The Rivals* are those to its traditions, customs and the regulations being followed with duty and rigour. Everyone respected these rules made mostly by Beau Nash, and was afraid of flouting them. For example, duelling was legally prohibited as bloodthirsty Sir Lucius exclamis in disgust : "Faith ! that same interruption in affairs of this nature shows very great ill-breeding." Capt. Absolute conceals his sword under his great coat as he is proceeding to fight a duel with Sir Lucius for he is too afraid of being rounded up. The wearing of swords was not allowed in public places. As Capt. Absolute apprehends : "a sword in the streets of Bath would raise as great an alarm as a mad dog" (Act V—Scene II). Fag in Act I—Scene I, line 71 onwards refers to the daily routine of the pleasure-seeking people of Bath......"In the morning we go to the pump-room ; after breakfast we saunter on the parades, or play a game at billiards ; at night we dance." The routine was the same for everybody and had to end at 11 p.m. as Fag indignantly exclaims, "but damn the place, I'm tired of it ; their regular horses stupefy me—not a fiddle nor a card after eleven."

Apart from these topical references, Sheridan gives us a picture of the life of Bath ; the type of people coming there and the aims that young and old, men and women pursue. The people that went there were motivated only by two things, either by the cure that the place offered for their ailment as Sir Anthony gave the whip to the horses since "another fit of gout was coming to make him a visit," or by the life of pleasure and amusement. The idle country landlords came there to ape the fashions of the town and to look more genteel. Bob Acres is an example of it. He feels that dress does make a difference after all and swears to throw away his old clothes at once. He learns the fashionable French dances although he finds himself utterly unfit for the task since he has a thoroughly English foot. The gay youth flogged in Bath to pursue beautiful belles and heiresses to fortune. Capt. Absolute is such a case. As Fag tells his fellow servants, his master goes to the pump-rooms but does not care to drink mineral

water. He has come there to enjoy the thrill of a disguised courting of a romantic girl Lydia Languish who represents another aspect of the life at Bath. The young romantic girls lay idling, reading romances and dreaming of romantic elopements to Gretna Green. Sir Lucius, a more intelligent country gentleman than Acres and one whose fortune has lately declined, has come there perhaps to win a fortune by a convenient marriage. For the old ladies and gentlemen also Bath provided such matrimonial chances and attractions. Mrs. Malaprop is awfully hungry for a marriage before she bids a final good-bye to her sweet passions. The tyrannical guardians like Sir Anthony and Mrs. Malaprop and the young rebellious lovers like Capt. Absolute and Lydia Languish must have been quite common in Bath. Similarly coward braggarts like Bob Acres, clever, mischievous servants aping the manners of their masters, like Fag and Lucy, duel maniacs like Sir Lucius, sentimental fools like Faulkland are the characters that represent the life of Bath in some aspect or the other, howsoever minor it might be. What is most important to be remembered is, that it was a carefree, gay life, of intrigues, gossips, scandals and flirtations. It was concerned only with the superficialities of life and with the philosophy of 'eat, drink and be merry'.

12. Art of Characterization in "The Rivals."

The Rivals has very rightly been called an artificial comedy of manners. It shows in its characters particular absurdities and oddities which render them ridiculous in certain situations. The origin and seeds of this type of comedy can be traced back in Ben Jonson's comedy of 'humour'. In his comedies, every man was in his humour, *i e.*, was a character with a particular oddity or eccentricity. The plot was to be contrived in such a manner that it would bring these qualities into prominence and render characters laughable. Thus every character of Jonson was a representative of a class, a mere 'type'. The Restoration comedy of manners, which was the chief source of Sheridan's inspiration, also followed the Jonsonian tradition. In the same line come the characters of *The Rivals*, so much so that one of the critics calls them mere "personified humours and no more."

The criticism is justified to a certain extent. Sheridan

deliberately chooses such names for his characters that they hint at a typical quality. This individual trait, we find accentuated throughout the play. For example, the name of Lydia Languish, the heroine, suggests an idle, ease-loving girl that languishes in romance and luxuries. Sir Anthony Absolute, is thoroughly dictatorial and dogmatic in his behaviour and views. Malaprop is made of Mal+a+propos, *i.e.* out of place—referring to her inappropriate use of words. Acres hints at the country gentleman luxuriating in his acres of landed property but not able to adjust himself in the fashionable Bath society ; Sir Lucius O'Trigger's name seems to suggest that his finger was always on the trigger of his revolver. He has certainly been depicted as a duel maniac in the play.

The humour of some characters has, however, not been indicated in their names, although they are as much the representatives of individual traits as the characters mentioned above. Faulkland has his humour of unreasonable jealousy as marked as the absoluteness of Sir Anthony.

Thus, it has to be admitted that to a certain extent Sheridan's characters are caricatures. But it would be unfair to say that they are nothing more. They do have certain individuality of their own. They have their opinions and interests which they pursue with great seriousness, however ridiculous they might seem to us in doing that. They do not give the impression of being mere puppets in the hands of the dramatist. They effectively assert certain qualities in their character that are other than their humours. For example Sir Anthony is a loving father, generous, humorous and romantic to the extreme. These are the qualities which have nothing to do with his absoluteness and, while his absoluteness becomes strongly associated with his name in our memory, we do not forget these traits of his.

Iolo Williams, the editor of Sheridan's plays, also remarks that in *The Rivals* Sheridan's "characters are abstractions of some comic trait, excellently diverting, but no living people." Herring finds this criticism "a little hard" and thinks that "it does not go far enough". Defending Sheridan he further remarks—"again, Mrs. Malaprop is so famous for her nice 'derangement of epitaphs' that it is seldom noticed how her vulgarity stands out against the courtly refinement of Sir

Anthony. Mrs. Malaprop's airs are the direct result of living in Bath. She is the provencal woman desperately trying to live up to the smartness of Bath, and be not too far behind London at the same time."

Another common place of criticism about Sheridan's characters is that they lack depth and subtlety. They show only the superficial qualities of mind, the inner recesses of their souls remain unfathomed. Doubtless, they are so; but we must remember that they are the representatives of an artificial society, which took manners to be the be-all and end-all of their serious concern. There was no mental or moral depth in their environment. Intrigue and snobbery, fashions and display of sentiments, occupied them so much that they forgot all about the basic passions of life. Whatever of these passions they displayed, they did it with whims, lightheartedness and sentimentality and made themselves absurd. Sheridan was not concerned in the play with the depiction of fundamental human passions but with the manners of a superficial people and their hypocrisy. The dramatist shows keen observation and insight in studying their artificial behaviour but never cares to reach, nor does he get to, the basic issues of life.

From the point of view of success in characterization "the great strength of *The Rivals* is that its characters are admirably contrasted and varied." Lydia and Julia, Capt. Absolute and Faulkland, Bob Acres and Sir Lucius show not only a considerable variety of characters that Sheridan could conceive, but they also form pairs to throw each other into relief. While Lydia is "devilish romantic" and a fantastic dreamer, Julia is serious and sober possessing a sufficient amount of commonsense. Her constancy and firm devotion to Faulkland contrast well with Lydia's caprices and frivolity in the affair with Beverley. Similarly Faulkland, if suspicious, ever morose in dissatisfaction and ever preparing his bitter cup for himself; whereas Capt. Absolute is practical and cool-headed. He is intelligent enough to understand the romantic foolishness of his beloved and to handle her cleverly. Both are placed in similar situations when they are rejected by their mistresses but while Faulkland behaves like a sentimental fool blaming the god of love as a tormentor and all the rest of it, Capt. Absolute acquits himself well, enjoys the absurdities of his mistress, uses

both fair and foul methods to bring her round and certainly wins her in the very scene of his being jilted, although the play does not say so.

The characters in *The Rivals* are hackneyed and traditional in essence. The Renaissance had given to the European drama certain models of characters in a comedy. The Latin comedies of Plautus and Terence supplied these models. The intriguing lover, the complete rascals of servants helping in their masters' affairs, the fool and the braggart, and the irrational headstrong father are the types that had been used in the European drama in general for a long time. As H. V. Routh puts it, "Sir Anthony, the testy headstrong father, Fag and Lucy, the menials who minister to their employer's intrigues, are as old as Latin comedy ; Bob Acres, the blustering coward is akin to Sir Andrew Aguecheek and had trod the stage in Jonson's learned sock ; Sir Lucius O'Trigger is related to cumberland's, O'Flaherty ; Mrs. Malaprop has a long pedigree, including Dogberry, Lady Froth, Mrs. Slipslop and Tabitha Bramble."

The characters in *The Rivals*, thus, are not original, yet they are very effective on the stage and remain in our memory for long. They are charming in their individual qualities and show that Sheridan, even when he exaggerated, showed a unique sense of theatrical effectiveness. As Nettleton puts it : "The courage of Bob Acres dwindles to the actual vanishing points when he feels his valour oozing out as it were at the palms of his hands, but the very exaggeration of cowardice enhances the acting possibilities of the duel scene. The passion of Sir Anthony Absolute mounts to sheer hyperbole, but heightens the dramatic climax of the quarrel scene with his son. If these are suggestions of farcical exaggeration and unrestraint in Sheridan's delineation of character, he has, at least, extraordinary mastery of effective dramatic art."

Witty dialogues are one of the principal causes of the popularity enjoyed by *The Rivals*. They work as a mask over a certain weakness in characterization. The talk between the characters is not always true to their nature. Servants are too intelligent and clever ; they can even aspire to compare with their masters. They speak a language that not only puzzles the rustics but even the well-read man. The continuous bustle and speed of action and sparkling wit in the dialogues

gives little time and inclination to the audience to protest against this weakness. Among the menial characters, Fag is the most unusual for a servant. In character portrayal Sheridan has a brilliant artificiality as he has it in the speeches of these characters. According to Nettleton, "he sacrifices naturalness on the altar of wit. Unlike honest Diggory, Fag and David vie in wit with their masters. Pope's question—Tell me if Congreve's fools are fools indeed ?' might be applied to Sheridan. Lucy's cleverness outwits Mrs. Malaprop, and her arch coquetry captivates Sir Lucius......... *The Rivals* is the initial work of a dramatist of twenty-three. If it fails to hold the mirror up to nature, it has, nonetheless, splendid audacity and fertility of dramatic invention and wit. It remains a triumph of artificial comedy."

13. Malapropism.

Malapropism has been defined in the Oxford dictionary as a "ludicrous misuse of word, especially in mistake for one resembling it." This is the meaning contained in the word also. It is a compound word, made of three French words 'Mal', 'a' and 'propos', meaning out of place—a thing inopportunely said or done. This is what Sheridan's Mrs. Malaprop does in *The Rivals*. She is fond of using all sorts of words to parade her learning but unfortunately misuses them. The only redeeming feature with them is that in spite of being wrong in their context, they suggest the correct word that should have been used there. In an attempt to show herself off as the "queen of dictionary" she only succeeds in disclosing her muddleheadedness and bankruptcy in learning.

Ironically enough, she herself comments upon her own 'fatal flaw' when she lectures Sir Anthony on the topic of female education. To the question of Sir Anthony about the type of education that should be give to young girls, she replies : "But above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of *orthodoxy* (orthography), that she might not misspell, and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do, and likewise that she might *reprehend* (comprehend) the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know, and I don't think there is a *superstitious* (superfluous) article in it." A further case of even more

poignant irony and self-condemnation comes from her when she tells Capt. Absolute : "Sure if I *reprehend* (comprehend) anything in tbis world it is the use of my *oracular* (vernacular) tongue and a nice *derangement* (arrangement) of *epitaphs* (epithets.)' The latter phrase 'derangement of epitaphs' almost provides a synonym for Malapropism.

While Mrs. Malaprop flatters herself about her achievement of an all-round education, her hollowness remains no secret to the characters in the play. Sir Anthony, Capt. Absolute, Sir Lucius and Julia all comment upon her habit of showing herself off. Sir Anthony mischievously tells her, "you are a true moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question", meaning that since every third word she uses is a misuse, it proves that attempts for female education are futile and a wastage. Sir Lucius indirectly comments upon her when he criticises the letter from his Delia "Here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get tneir *habesacorpus* from any doubt in Christendom." Capt. Absolute refers to her "dull chat with hard words which she don't understand", and Julia very rightly indicates her characteristic in attempting to overwhelm all she meets, with "her select words so ingeniously misapplied without being mispronounced."

Mrs. Malaprop commits her mistakes not in one way but many. The most obvious of these are of the following kinds :—

(i) Where she confuses the almost similar sounds of two words : *e.g.*, 'progeny' for 'prodigy' ; 'contagious' for 'contiguous', 'commotion' for 'emotion' ; 'superficial' for 'superfluous' . . . . . etc.

(ii) Where she is allured by a bombastic, high-sounding word much different in meaning from the intended word. *e. g.* 'Illuminate' for 'elucidate, ; 'physignomy' for 'phraseology, ... etc.

(iii) Where she is only a bit wrong and the word can give the correct meaning also, although in a far-fetched manner, *e.g.* Alacrity for affability.'

(iv) Where she uses the word exactly opposite in meaning

to the intended word ; *e.g.* 'Simulation' for 'dissimulation' : malevolence for 'benevolence' ; 'derangement, for 'arrangement'. . . . .etc.

Thus the instances of her mistakes can be multiplied much more. (An exhaustive list of these has been given separately at the end of the notes).

Some of the critics, however, are not prepared to give the credit of the creation of 'Malapropism' to Sheridan, for they argue, he might have created Mrs. Malaprop, but the idea of the 'derangement' of epithets was borrowed by him. Shakespeare's Dogberry and Verghese, the two constables in '*Much Ado About Nothing*' commit similar mistakes of the misuse of words ; then there is Fielding's Mr. Slipslop, whose very name is suggestive of the slip of the tongue. A sure proof of Sheridan's indebtedness in this connection is found in Mrs. Tryfort, a character in his mother's unpublished play '*A Journey to Bath.*' Some of the mistakes of Mrs. Tryfort have been bodily lifted by Sheridan and used in case of Mrs. Malaprop. But all the harm that these ancestors of Mrs. Malaprop can do to her, is that they prove her a stock figure. But so are many other characters of Sheridan or for that matter of many other dramatists. The achievement of Sheridan lies in the fact that he made such perfect use of a stock figure, as to surpass all. Mrs. Malaprop proved so vigorous and memorable a creation that all her ancestors faded into oblivion before her and she won the pride of place in the dictionary. Malapropism was crowned, while Dogberryism and Tryfortism were dethroned and forgotten. The creation of Malaprop in itself is, thus, a great achievement of Sheridan.

14. A Note on the Minor Characters in the Play.

There are four minor characters in the play, all servants. Fag is the most important of them all and serves Captain Absolute ; Thomas is his friend, the coachman of Sir Anthony ; David is the servant of Bob Acres, the country gentleman, and finally Lucy, the only maid-servant, is in the service of Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia. These minor characters contribute in a three-fold manner to the play. They have their contribution, towards the movement of the plot, in the provision of wit and humour to the play and in the interest they impart with their individual characteristics.

Collectively speaking, the minor characters act the part of Greek Chorus, in *The Rivals*. They comment on the interests of their masters and provide new information to the audience from time to time. Their part is subsidiary yet their role is vital. They provide the greater part of the exposition of the play. Informing us about the fortunes and interests of the major characters as they stand in the beginning of the plot, Fag and Thomas thus act like the chorus in the classical drama. It is the servants that provide information to their masters from time to time and thus bring turns and movements to the plot. Fag informs his master. Capt. Absolute, of a very important secret, which he has cleverly extracted from Lucy, that it is Lydia Languish herself whom Sir Anthony wants Capt. Absolute to marry. This valuable information brings a vital turn in the attitude of the son to the father and in the development of plot. Lucy discloses the secret of Sir Lucius' mistake to the audience that he has been duped by her into believing that his Delia is the niece Lydia and not Mrs. Malaprop. This act of Lucy also contributes in making the plot complicated. More than in the exposition and complication, the servants help in the happy denouement of the play. They always keep themselves alive to the developments in the fortunes of their masters and when in the end there appears the danger of bloodshed and killing, Fag and David bring the timely alarm to Sir Anthony and Mrs. Malaprop and thus save a horrible catastrophe.

The four servants also provide amusement to the audience with their wit and humour. The wit of Fag is unusual for a servant and has brought the criticism upon Sheridan that he has imparted his own excessive wit quite benevolently to all and sundry. If one can explain away the witticism of Fag as acquired due to his long association with his witty master Capt. Absolute, David's share of it cannot be accounted for in the same manner. It might have been a natural gift in his case but it is certainly as smart and amusing as Fag's. The other two, Thomas and Lucy are not so witty, but they do provide occasions for humour. Thomas seems, dull in contrast to Fag, whom he considers as his superior. Thomas' sense of humour of course does sparkle in the only scene, in which he appears, in his reference to his old master's fit of gout

coming to visit him and his giving it the slip and whip. Lucy is not witty in her talk but is too much of a clever hussy in her actions. She dupes her mistresses Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia, and also Sir Lucius. She betrays their faith and yet earns money from them. She is not a simpleton she is taken to be, but is the feminine counterpart of Fag, who alone surpasses her in cleverness.

Individually taken all the four servants in the play are the stock characters of the lower rank, since long appearing repeatedly in novels and plays. They are as much the flat characters or the 'types' as the major characters are. Fag is the example of the roguish but faithful servant, serving the interests of his master whole-heartedly. His wit and affected elegance are the influence of his fashionable young master and the genteel society, whose manners he has been trying to cultivate. David is as much faithful and devoted to his master Acres as Fag is to Capt. Absolute, but he is a country-born and country-bred person and hence has not the arrogance or cunning of Fag. He is simple and straightforward and is interested in nothing else but in his master's complete safety. Fag and David both keep themselves awake to the requirements of the situation and are instrumental in averting the final crisis of duels. They, however, contrast well in their manners and interests. Whereas Fag likes the up-to-date fashions, David wants to stick to simplicity; Fag thoroughly enjoys the life of pleasure at Bath, David would like to be away from it safe at home. Fag is the intriguing liar common in the fashionable life of town. David is honest, simple and truthful, like his fellows in the countryside. Thomas, also, is the country-bred coachman of a village landlord and seems to be simpler than even David. Fag exercises superiority over him by patronizing him and promising to initiate him to the pleasures of the town. He dadresses his fellow servant as Thomas, who in turn calls his superior, Mr. Fag. Thomas shows himself behind Fag, also in trying to stick to the old fashion of the countryside, *e.g.* wigs. Luckis the stock-figure of comedies, the clever maid-servant of a foolish widow. She assumes the character of a simpleton to extract money and secrets out of everybody—Mrs. Malaprop, Lydia, Sir Lucius and Capt. Absolute. Capt. Absolute and Lydia bribe her to keep her mum about their affair, so does Mrs.

Malaprop to keep her silent about her correspondence with Sir Lucius and also to coax out the secrets of her niece. She unscrupulously betrays all and prides in her cunning. It is only Fag who over-reaches her once. Lucy contrasts with other servants in being undependable, yet she succeeds in becoming the confidante of more people than even Fag. Her villanies are finally discovered but she appears no more in the play to allow the audience to enjoy her discomfiture at the embarrassing discovery.

15. Weakness of the Play.

There has been no dearth of critics who have thought *The Rivals* a weak play, or at least not a very great one. It has been criticized as a "young play" and as noted by Moore in his Diary, even "Sheridan always said that *The Rivals* was one of the worst plays in the language and he would have given anything he had, not to have written it." The remark has certainly been made out of modesty and cannot be taken as literally true. Even if it is a play having many weaknesses, according to B. Ifor Evans, "it is a miracle as a first play."

Among the weaknesses of the play that have been quite often mentioned are sentimentality in the Julia-Faulkland scene; farcical element; an indiscriminate distribution of wit to all his characters, high and low; plagiarisms and lack of profundity or concern with mere superficiality.

Referring to the drawbacks of the play, Allardyce Nicoll remarks: "*The Rivals*, as a whole, is a somewhat disappointing play. Some scenes in it are so excellent that we notice all the more clearly the weaknesses in the whole plan. Sentimental motives clash with elements taken from the Congreve school; Jonsonian exaggeration conflicts heavily with the play of wit and fancy. About the whole play, too, breathes an atmosphere of farce, and although there is something of farce in every great comedy, this lower strain tends to weaken the general effect of Sheridan's work."

The worst of the weaknesses in the play is the sentimental element in it. The fault seems grosser and unpardonable since Sheridan was an avowed enemy of sentimentality and had ridiculed it in the Prologue of the play. As Nettleton observes: "Like Goldsmith, Sheridan could not at once rid himself wholly

of the contagion of sentimentality which he attacked. Consciously, or not, he allowed the Julia-Faulkland underplot to retain in some measure the conventional phrasing of sentimental drama. Though Faulkland is a 'humour' character, in whom jealousy is carried to comic exaggeration, some of his and Julia's speeches seem rather an unconscious echo of sentimental diction than raillery at its extravagance." The explanation of this weakness can be that the force of sentimentality in his age was so strong that even Sheridan could not save himself from it, or he might have brought it in, to make the play popular because the audience immensely liked such scenes. Another way in which we can defend Sheridan for this fault is that these sentimental scenes can "be played 'straight' or treated ironically." If we agree to accept these scenes as ironical, which is seldom done, they cease to be a blemish.

The next fault that mars the play is its farcical element. No one can deny that Mrs. Malaprop, Bob Acres, Sir Lucius or even Sir Anthony are such exaggerated characters that would have done credit to any farcical play. The first two characters are especially in the constant danger of dwindling into the farcical, though they never do. Similarly there are not a few situations in the play, which are clearly and creditably farcical but not quite happy for a comedy. However, the whole play cannot be dismissed as a farce as the sweeping remarks of the critics seem to suggest. As Nicoll had to admit, "there is something of farce in every great comedy"; what if there is something of it in *The Rivals*? One should not be too hasty in calling, even the element of theatricality in him, farcical. Sheridan did have that gift of heightening by contrast and caricature, the comic aspects of character and situation. This also has sometimes been responsible for giving to some readers the impression of too much farcicality, when the reader was not quite chary.

Then there are also certain improbabilities in the play. Sheridan, very benevolently, imparts his own capacity for wit to all his characters, may they be low or high. Servants like Fag and David, in the normal course, are not expected to be as witty as their masters. Though Nature has never been miserly or partial in her gifts and a foolish master or a witty

servant is not an impossibility, verisimilitude demands the masters to be generally much more intelligent and witty than the servants. However, in Fag and David, apart from wit, there certainly are such qualities which show them lagging much behind their masters. There are other kinds of improbabilities also in the play. A contemporary periodical, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, brought out an improbability when it wrote: "Though we have aften heard of younger brothers and fortune hunters assuming fictitious title and estates as credentials to rich heiresses, it seems very unlikely that real rank and fortune should be deemed an objection, and therefore dismissed as in piece before us". But this opinion, to B. Ifor. Evans, seem, critical myopia, because it very much overlooks the type of artificial society which Sheridan was painting and particularly the character of the young romantic heroine Lydia whose head was turned by the indiscriminate reading of romances.

"Another charge," says Balston, "which has been brought against Sheridan is that of plagiarism, and the accusation has been supported by a hundred pieces of evidence". The ancestors of Mrs. Malaprop, Sir Anthony, Capt. Absolute and Lydia Languish have been traced out in the earlier plays and novels and Sir Lucius' egging on Bob Acres has been dubbed as the true copy of a scene from Shakespeare. The characters also are all stock characters of comedy certainly indicating that Sheridan's genius was not so creative. Sheridan himself accepts the insinuation to a certain extent in his Preface admitting that certain ideas might have found expression in the play since he had read about them and they had been floating in his mind since then. But just because of this, to charge him as a plagiarist is certainly not justifiable. There never was a writer wholly original. Sheridan did borrow, there is no doubt about that; but whatever he borrowed he assimilated and made his own. His work has a completeness and individuality which is very impressive. His material has been welded into a complete organic whole—a work of art. One example of Sheridan's borrowed material should suffice in this connection. Though Mrs. Malaprop had had quite notable ancestors in Dogberry, Mrs. Slipslop and Mrs. Tryfort, the habit of the misuse of words is today not known after the name of any-

one of them. It is the word Malapropism that finds a place in the dictionary, and not Degberryism or Tryfortism.

Last of all, there is the charge of superficiality or the lack of profundity against *The Rivals* to be considered. The greatest fully of this criticism is that it accuses Sheridan of not achieveing what he never aspired for, nor tried to achieve. *The Rivals* was neither *by* the profound, nor *for* the profound, nor *of* the profound. "It does not reflect a mind seriously concerned over the problems of society as do the plays of Ibsen and Shaw", says Thorndike; his comedies "were the work of a young man, with a great dramatist and a great humorist". There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in his philosophy. He was not writing of a society which went deep into the problems of life. It was a society of artificial manners, intriguing, scandal-mongering and whiling away the time as if in a golden world. Thus if Sheridan could not throw off the shackles of the limitations and influences of his age and tradition, he cannot be accused. He, of course, remains at a lower level than the very greatest occupy, because he did not write about the universal passions of the human heart. He is not *with* Shakespeare but not many would deny that before Shaw appeared, his popularity was certainly only next to Shakespeare's.

16. Characters.

(i) Sir Anthony Absolute :

Sir Anthony is a stock figure out of the classical comedy—the type of irate father. As his name 'Absolute' suggests, he is self-willed and imperious in his attitude. He never spared the rod in case of his son when he was a child, and even when the son is now young, Sir Anthony behaves with him like a dictator. His authoritativeness is seen not only in case of his behaviour with his son but in all that he does and also in his strong views. His son has naturally inherited some of his father's obstinacy and dogmatism. When he was a boy, he was told, "Jack do this"; if he did not, he was knocked down. But now the same attitude is shown by his father in case of Capt. Absolute's marriage also. He would have him marry the girl of his choice even if she were the choicest among the ugly creatures—humped and cock-eyed and the rest of it. The

son, naturally rebels for he is already in secret amours with a lady of his own choice. Sir Anthony is furious at his son's impertinence and shouts at him all sorts of threats of disinheriting and even disowning him. "Now damn me", says he, "if ever I call you Jack again, while I live." The intellectual duel between father and son provides one of the most amusing scenes of the play and is the finest feast of wit in it.

Sir Anthony's absolutism comes out into prominence equally strongly, in his opinion about female education. In his discourse with Mr. Malaprop on the subject, he expresses himself in favour of girls being kept quite unlettered : "I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet." For him all the evils of disobedience and impertinence in Lydia are due to her "diabolical knowledge." For once, Sir Anthony is ironically right but the absurdity of his generalization, that all evils in women are due to their education, is too clear to be mentioned. In parental tyranny Sir Anthony is much ahead Mrs. Malaprop, to whom he suggests a cure for Lydia, that is utterly ruthless. He wants her to put Lydia under lock and key and deny her even simple food for a couple of days. All this is to be done simply to bring her round. What a despot he sounds here !

Sir Anthony is a benevolent despot all the same. In his heart of hearts he is very much affectionate to his son and is polite and mannerly to those in whose contact he comes. Sir anthony is perhaps conscious that he has been something of a tyrant. He apparently feels pride in it, yet repeatedly denies that he is ever unfairly angry. While he continues fretting and fuming, he says that he is cool and accuses his son of being in a temper. He is certainly not wrong when he himself summarises his true nature : "But take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted ; no one more easily led—when I have my own way ;—but do not put me in a frenzy"—etc.

This actually happens, while he has been abusing his son to his heart's content. As soon as the son comes before him as a penitent son and surrenders himself, he is all sympathy, love and forgiveness for him. His parental pride wins and so he is out to help his son in every possible way.

Another marked quality of Sir Anthony's character is his hastiness. He decides things is no time and then loses no time in executing the decisions. His decision once taken cannot be altered. Thomas reports to Fag, how Sir Anthony, once apprehensive of a visit of gout, "had a mind to gi't the slip, and whip!" and they "were all off at an hour's warning". Fag corroborates this statement of Thomas. "Ay, ay! hasty in everything, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute!"

Sir Anthony Absolute still retains in his old age fine appreciation of female charm and beauty. As a young man he was very romantic. He had had a love marriage and would never have married an ugly girl even for a kingdom. His son is not so much of an intriguer for beauty as he was. Sir Anthony's effusions about Lydia's charms show him in a funny yet sincerely romantic mood. He minutely describes her cheeks, eyes, lips, neck etc. and seeing the indifference (affected of course) of his son, blurts out that he has a great mind to marry the girl himself.

Sir Anthony has also been shown as one of the wittiest characters in the play. That is natural for a baronet of good-breeding. He is smart and cutting in his remarks and gives a kick for a kick. The best of his witticism comes out in his wordy duel with his son, who for once disobeys him. However, with the ladies, although he is gently ironical, he never uses his caustic wit.

That he is a true country gentleman, well-bred and businesslike is borne out easily. While he shows that he wants a beautiful wife for his son, he is alive to the financial gain also, that he would like to have, by marrying his son to a rich heiress. It is not that he is greedy but he knows the importance of money in making one happy. He has been making an allowance of fifty pounds a year to his son so that he may live a gentleman's life.

Apart from shrewdness, Sir Anthony also has good sense and culture of a baronet. Even with the vulgarism of Mrs. Malaprop he does not get disgusted. All that he does is to mingle a gentle sarcasm in his remarks for her. "I must confess that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer." At the end of the play while everyone shows himself happy with the outcome

of the events Mrs. Malaprop is still disappointed. Sir Anthony comes to her rescue and cheers her up with a reconciliatory tribute : "Come, Mrs. Malaprop, don't be cast down, you are in your bloom yet." His next insinuation also has a very gentle irony when he proposes to drink a health to the young couple and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop.

(ii) Captain Absolute:

Captain Absolute is the hero of the play, although he has none of the exceptionally heroic qualities. He is the only normal and balanced character in the play and therefore not so very interesting. In general, his qualities are : a sound judgement of other's character, a useful common-sense and a consistent presence of mind. He is a romantic yet sensible lover ; intriguing and fashionable ; bold and manly like a Captain, and witty, decent and well-behaved.

As a gallant youth he has fallen head over ears in love with a beautiful lady, Lydia, who, as we know, is a sentimental fool. To satisfy her whim Capt. Absoulte has to woo her in disguise as the poor Ensign Beverley. He is too much in love with her and would not take the risk of the discovery of impersonation. He rather enjoys courting her by proxy. While Lydia is dying to elope with him and thus lose her fortune by marrying against her aunt's wishes, the realist in Capt. Absolute does not agree to it. He wants to keep both, the girl as well as her fortune. It is not that he wants to marry Lydia for money. If it had been so he would not have given his father the tough opposition which he gives, to thwart his plans of an arranged marriage of his own choice. All the same, like his father, he has a shrewd sense of financial importance in worldly pleasures, beyond which this gay hero does not look.

His common-sense in love is in clear contrast to Lydia's and Faulkland's sentimentality in love. While Lydia altogether loses her head while in love, Faulkland prepares the bitter cup of jealousies and doubts for himself. "Am not I a lover?" says the Capt. to Faulkland, "and a romantic one too. Yet do I carry everywhere with me such a confounded farrago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes. . . . . ." etc. His romantic sense has led him once or twice to agree to Lydia's plan of elopement but

his sound common-sense always kept him from furthering the plan.

He has a sound judgement of everybody's character. He understands his father in and out—that he is authoritative yet affectionate. Even after seeing him in a temper, he realizes that he will be forgiven on the least pretext. The other moment the goes to him as a pretending penitent on learning that Lyida is his father's choice also, and is forgiven. Similarly he thoroughly knows Mrs. Malaprop, whom he describes quite correctly, though a little mischievously, in his letter to Lydia. He instantly flatters her face while he comments on the writer of the letter, because he knows her to be a proud, self-important woman, needing to be flattered. He makes a correct estimate of Faulkland and Acres also. To Faulkland he offers his sound criticism and suggestions to get rid of his suspicious nature, but on Acres' braggart nature he only laughs. The best judgement that he has shown in the play, is about Lydia's character, because even while he is madly in love with her, he does not take her as a monstrosity of virtues. He keeps up her humour knowing full well that "such is Lydia's caprice; that to undeceive her was probably to lose her."

Capt. Absolute shows a unique presence of mind whenever he is in trouble, or there is need for improvisation. He over-reaches both Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia, when to one he gives himself out as Capt. Absolute and to the other as Beverley. Although he wants Lydia's money, he cannot say so to her; rather to keep her in good humour he acts the romantic lover admirably: "Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay." Very soon Lydia starts behaving pettishly to him and then again he rises to the occasion and at once counters her by showing himself an offended lover. Similarly, when he is going to fight the duel with Sir Lucius and is encountered by his father, he muffles up his face, changes his voice and gives out his name as Saunderson. For a moment he does succeed in duping him.

He also has a reservoir of good-humour which he spills on all occasions to his advantage. He knows fully well the oddities

of Acres and Faulkland and while he laughs at their cost, he is never malicious or revengeful It is his cheerful gay character, that has won him many friends and their confidence. He behaves with his servant Fag also with indulgence and good-humour.

A captain in the King's Army as he is, he is not without a soldier's firmness and bravery. His strength of character of shown in the bloodness with which he faces all the threats of his father. Even if he is disinherited, he will not give up the love-promises he has made. When Sir Lucius challenges him he readily accepts the challenge because he is desperate. When the trifling cause of their duel is known he begs pardon of Sir Lucius but when the old Irishman continues to threaten, he confidently draws his sword to face him.

His implacable wit is none of the least achievements of his character. He has a cackground of good-breeding and constant association with people of manners. The other characters in the play are also quite witty but he outshines them all. His wit is keen and scintillating.

With intelligence, he corners his father, who boasts that he would not have married the girl of anybody's choice but his own, even if he were to lose an empire by that. The son at once asks whether he would not have done it even to obey his father. The question puts Sir Anthony in a very awkward position. In his wordy duel with his father, he never lags behind.

Thus in this play with comical characters, he is the only one who seems perfectly normal. He has neither been caricatured nor satirized. His qualities are so much in the average in him that they do not seem striking and therefore do not attract attention. It is not Capt. Absolute but Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony, whom we remember ever afterwards for their grotesque and funny behaviour.

(iii) Faulkland

Faulkland is the hero of the sub-plot in the play, the Julia-Faulkland episode as it is called. He is the sentimental lover *par excellence*, a character quite common in the comedy of humours. He is jealous, whimsical, suspicious and over-sentimental.

As a lover he is sincerely and deeply in love with Julia, who returns his love with equal faithfulness and warmth. But being sentimental he cannot enjoy his good fortune. Even in the smiles and gaiety of his Julia he finds an occasion for distress. He imagines himself an ideal lover who is delicately sensitive and sets the store of his happiness by the company of only one person. He highly speaks of "the mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers" and opines that no smile should dance on their lips till they meet again. This ideality in love leads him to ask if Julia loves him enough ? Looking to her gaities as reported by Acres, he himself concludes that she does not.

His suspicious nature brings to his mind the theory that women often love for fortune and handsomeness. Even when Julia has assured him that none of these causes has ever influenced her love, he does not feel quite at home. for he thinks she might have loved him, only out of gratitude for having saved her life. He thus imagines troubles even where there are none.

As Capt. Absolute remarks, he carries with him everywhere "a confounded farrago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes and all the flimsy furniture of a country miss's brain." His jealousy is fully roused when Bob Acres, enthusiastically reports about the bloom and charm and spirits of Julia. He perhaps starts suspecting Acres also and a host of imaginary lovers who might have touched her or danced with her, or even excited love passions in her. He was sincerely worried about the well-being and happiness of his beloved a moment before, but on learning that she was perfectly so, he wishes she was not "too happy" after all.

With his caprices he not only tortures himself but also his mistress who has all along been quite patient with him. With repeated effusions of his morbidity and jealous disposition, he even exasperates her. She breaks with him in anger on learning that his story of having killed a man in a duel was fiction after all, and was invented simply to test her faithfulness.

But as Sir Anthony rightly remarks, all his faults proceed from his "delicacy and warmth of affection." This is a redeem-

ing feature indeed. But it seems throughout that Faulkland is very weak in his will power and is altogether incorrigible. The fact that he is conscious of his faults, and is not slow to blame himself for his suspicious nature is another redeeming feature of his character. He resolves to mind himself but fails again and again. It is only when he gets some sort of a shock-therapy that he is cured of his jealousy and caprices, is reconciled to his ever-loving Julia and lives with her happily ever after as a typical end of a romantic comedy would have him to.

There are some minor qualities of Faulkland, which have only been hinted and not elaborated. He is quite a handsome young man, chivalrous enough to have saved a drowning fair lady's life at some personal risk. He must have been quite a generous and trustworthy friend, because Capt. Absolute only confides in him (apart from his servant Fag, to whom he might have confided for quite different reasons). His affectionate generosity does not let him take offence at the ridicule which his friend Capt. Absolute extracts at his cost. He rather readily agrees to be his second in the duel. Even Sir Anthony knows his inner worth and finds him worthy of the hand of Julia whose guardian he is, and in whose case he saw no reason to exercise his parental authority except for final reconciliation.

Faulkland, however, is the sentimental lover, who seems thoroughly disgusting in his sentimentality except when he is excessively so and becomes amusing. He must have been taken seriously by the eighteenth century audience but to-day his episode with Julia is criticized as a blemish on the play. He may also be taken as a case of self-criticism of a sentimental lover, and in that case at once would he justify the pains taken with him in the play. A further proof of his worthlessness is that he is not at all essential to the action of the play. He is, however, valuable as a foil to the hero Capt. Absolute.

(iv) Bob Acres :

Acres is among the funniest characters of the play almost verging on the farcical. He is essentially a foolish though honest and innocent, country squire who aspires for being a man of fashion. He is a type of character that had graced since long the classical comedies. There is no dearth of coward

braggarts in Jonsonian comedy of humour; Acres' character is also the same. But for his weaknesses of aping the town fashions and swaggering, he is unmalicious, simple and of sociable temper.

Till Capt. Absolute is officially brought as a suitor for Lydia, it is Acres' trial to win Lydia's love. He fails, and in spite of Mrs. Malaprop's favour, gains only disgust from her niece. He, foolishly attributes this failure of his to his backwardness in fashions and to his country-dress of a fox-hunting squire. He consequently at once dismisses his old dresses and decorates himself in the latest fashions of Bath, innocently and proudly telling his servant David that "dress does make a difference". He gets his hair curled to the great amazement and admiration of his servant and engages a French master to teach him French dances. But he is too much of a country-bred gentleman, having anti-Gallican toes, to be able to learn them and gives up the attempt in disgust.

In the eighteenth century society, fashionable gentlemen swore with zeal all sorts of oaths. Acres not only does not fail to copy them but does so most originally and abundantly. He calls his oaths *sentimental swearing* or *oaths referential* since they are always appropriate to the context and occasion. With his oaths, he provides a constant source of humour to the play.

His oaths and swaggering go together. If he has to be with the highest he must keep up their code of honour. So when he is dismissed as a suitor, he takes, or is made to take offence at the conduct of Beverley, his rival for Lydia's hand. Acres is essentially a coward; he might not have found the insult of dismissal enough offence for a duel if he could have exercised his independent judgement. He is egged on by Sir Lucius to agree to challenge Beverley and be an honourable man. He now shows his true bragging nature and frets and fumes at his adversary, who is quite at a safe distance. It is at the King's Mead Fields, the place for duel, that he is revealed in his true colours. As the time for the duel draws near, he gets more and more nervous, his courage fails him completely and he desperately tries to keep it up. When luckily, after the discovery that Beverley is none else but his friend Absolute, he gets a chance

to extricate himself from the trying situation, he is too happy. He is prepared to be a bachelor all his life rather than be killed in gaining a wife. Repeated insults from Sir Lucius fail to excite him to fight. His cowardice is also very clear from she funny scene, where his servant David expresses his fear of fighting with deadly weapons—pistols and swords.

Acres is essentially a fool and has not the capacity to understand that he is being befooled and overreached. While Captain Absolute encourages him in his threats to Beverley by calling him the "Fighting Bob" and inventing the fiction that he is reputed to kill a man every week, he does not at all know that he is simply providing amusement and fun by his swaggerings. Similarly, he gets no inclination of Sir Lucius' selfish motive in exciting him to fight Beverley. While he has been enthusiastically describing Julia's health and happiness to Faulkland he does not even smell that he is doing more harm than good. It is very natural that Lydia found him quite intolerable and disgusting.

For the readers and audience, however, Acres is not so. He is thoroughly interesting, and boisterously amusing. With his oaths and swaggerings he provides a feast of fun. He also gains the sympathy of the audience by his simplicity, innocence, generosity and affability. In a true sportsman's spirit he reconciles himself to his failure and with affection and friendliness invites all the company to the New Rooms for an evening's enjoyment in honour of the newly engaged lovers. Acres, thus, remains a more likeable and memorable character than many others in the play.

(v) Sir Lucius O'Trigger:

Like Sir Anthony, Mrs. Malaprop, Faulkland and Acres, Sir Lucius also has his own humour, caricatured to gain more effect on the stage. He has been given a place in the play, primarily with the aim of providing humour, himself also being gifted with a sense of it.

He is the typical Irish adventurer of his times. He has lost his past glory and fortune but is still proud of his ancestry and their achievements. He has not the means, but he tries

to live up to the reputation of his forefathers at least in character and bravery.

Being poor, he is keen to rehabilitate himself by marrying some rich lady. But his sense of gentlemanliness does not let him confess so. He is really honest in his intentions. "I am so poor", says he, "that I cannot afford to do a dirty action." Lucy also confirms his honourable nature when she says. "Though not over-rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune." In his affair with Delia also, he carries on his correspondence with her because Lucy had duped him into believing that his Delia was the niece and not the aunt. Sir Lucius will certainly welcome fortune if it comes into the bargain along with the ladylove. He sincerely and a bit too complacently, pursues his affair and bribes Lucy handsomely for acting a go-between. He kisses her as further reward not quite scrupulously, though to the satisfaction of Lucy.

There is something of a bold intriguer in Sir Lucius which lands him into trouble. He eggs on Bob Acres to fight Beverley for selfish ends. His correspondence with Mrs. Malaprop also is a mismanaged love-intrigue.

The bloodthirsty and bold adventurer in him keeps him ever ready to pick up quarrels and fight duels. He has real courage, without which it would not have been possible to come with a drawn sword against a young Captain like Absolute. Even when the quarrel has been made up between Acres and Beverley and attempts are being made to pacify him, he does not readily agree to withdraw.

However, in everything Sir Lucius does he scrupulously tries to be gentlemanly. In writing the letter of challenge, in taking offence, and in actually inviting the adversary to fight, when face to face, he always uses most polite and mannerly language and advises Acres to do the same. There is real generosity in him for he finally accepts the apology of Capt. Absolute and shakes hands with him on learning that his Delia was not Lydia after all.

He is sarcastic in his allusions to Mrs. Malaprop, who has been instrumental in his discomfiture. He offers her to Abso-

lute and Acres and dissociates himself completely from her. In contrast to Sir Anthony's chivalrous remarks his attitude wints the curt epithet of a barbarian from Mrs. Malaprop, the infatuated old woman. Strangely, to the old lady, Sir Lucius has no regard for her tender feelings. He has spoken bluntly once before also when Lydia denied having written the letters to him. While Mrs. Malaprop honestly acknowledges her part in the affair he contemptuously turns away from her. Strangely thus, in his behaviour towards Mrs. Malaprop, he shows some lack of polish. Perhaps it is, because of her, that his dreams have been frustrated.

On the whole, he has been intended as a brave, honest and lovable character. When the Irishman of the times took offence on their national character, being ridiculed in his portrait, Sheridan had to come out with an explanation and a denial that he had any such intentions. The bold adventurers desirous of mending their fortunes through a marriage with a rich lady, were not uncommon in the age. It was quite legitimate, therefore, for the dramatist to use one in his play.

(vi) Mrs. Malaprop :

Mrs. Malaprop is one of most famous characters of the English stage, who have won immortality. Among the *Dramatis Personae* of the play, she is the most interesting and memorable. She has won more honour than even her illustrious ancestors like Dogberry of Shakespeare or Mrs. Tryfort of Mrs. Sheridan or Tabitha of Smollet, and has been given a place in the English dictionary, where she has formed a word after her name, *i.e.*, Malapropism.

The meaning of the word Malapropism points out the main characteristic of her. Her name consists of the French 'Mal', 'a', and 'propos', *i.e.*, out of place, indicating her inappropriate use of words. The high sounding, bombastic or mouthful of words she calls into her service much too often, without understanding their meaning or the wrong context in which she uses them. This is an attempt at parading her learning, which again is a part of her inordinate pride. She never speaks but makes herself ridiculous by a 'derangement of epitaphs', and an ironical aspersion on her 'parts of speech'. Her mistakes are the choicest of the language and are the very life of

the humour and fun in the play. *The Rivals* would go bankrupt without her.

Her sense of self-importance and vanity finds sundry other expressions also. Her unsuccessful effort to live up to the smartness of Bath is very diverting and silly. She can be quoted as an example of the woman's psychology in thinking that she never will get old. Mrs. Malaprop is fifty already but she is never tired of the choicest toilet and fashions in clothes, laces and frills. This attempt at beautifying herself can be excusable but to think of a romantic love affair and marriage after scoring half a century of springs is ridiculous indeed. For the fulfilment of her absurd infatuation she writes love-letters to Sir Lucius under a romantic pseudonym 'Delia' and comes to the inescapable embarrassment and discomfiture at the end. Sir Lucius bluntly ridicules her and offers her to Absolute and Acres. Only Sir Anthony tickles her vanity a little by assuring her that she still has charm, and wishing her a husband.

This brings out a further prominent quality of her character —her stupidity in many things which she says or does. In the above example of Sir Anthony wishing her a husband, she is rendered an utter simpleton in not at all understanding that she is being befooled. Earlier she shows her tomfoolery in openly accepting that she wrote the letters to Sir Lucius as 'Delia' and then insinuating to the old Irishman to propose to her : "When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses". Sir Lucius only looks stupefied at her impertinence.

This stupidity of hers comes out many times in the form of unladylike coarseness of conduct. She intercepts the letters of her niece and her lover ; and not only that, she also feels proud in her baseness. To an outsider or at most an acquaintance, like Capt. Absolute, she relates her meanness with utter shamelessness. The letter in which she was abused by Beverley, she foolishly hands over to Capt. Absolute to read and discuss.

It seems quite amusing to see that with all this coarseness of conduct she professes the manners and dutifulness to her niece. She is never tired of telling her what becomes a young

woman and what does not. She wants Lydia to forget her lover Beverley but she herself is infatuated to an absurdity. She even becomes so vulgar as to refer very indelicately to her own late husband.

She is also a typical chaperon of a comic play, who jealously guards her ward. She feels she has a right to do that, although in her exercise of authority she is neither as cruel nor as strong as Sir Anthony. When Lydia rebels against her she can at most ask her to get out of the room.

We should give even the devil his (or her) due. It is controversial whether she is a "weather-beaten she-dragon" or not; but to her credit it must be said that she is neither greedy of Lydia's money nor is unkind to her. Sir Anthony in her place would have confined Lydia to lock-and-key and let her go without food for three or four days but she never even thinks of that.

To sum up, it will not be out of place to quote Mrs. Oliphant's defence of Mrs. Malaprop's character: "She is the plausible well-bred woman with a great deal of vanity and no small share of good nature whose inversion of phrase is quite representative of the blurred realisation she has of surrounding circumstances, and who is quite sincerely puzzled by the discovery that she is not so well-qualified to enact the character of Delia as her niece would be. Mrs. Malaprop has none of the harshness of Mrs. Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer* and we take it unkind of Captain Absolute to call her 'a weather-beaten she-dragon'. The complacent nod of her head, the smile on her face, her delightful self-satisfaction and confidence in her "parts of speech", have nothing repulsive in them. No doubt she imposed upon Bob Acres............But she is not unkind to Lydia, though the minx deserved it,—and has no desire to appropriate her fortune. She smiles upon us still in many a watering place, large, gracious, proud of her conversational powers, always a delightful figure to meet with...... Sir Anthony, though so amusing on the stage, is more conventional, since we know he must get angry presently whenever we meet him, although his coming round again is equally certain; but Mrs. Malaprop is never quite to be calculated upon and is always capable of a new simile as captivating as that of the immortal "allegory on the banks of the Nile".

(vi) Lydia Languish :

She is the heroine of the play and is exactly what her name suggests, a silly romantic being, languishing in her comfortable sofa for elopement and secret marriage. She has beauty and wealth, that bring a number of gallant lovers round her like a swarm of flies.

She has, however, her own peculiar conception of love and marriage, deduced from her reading of cheap romances and novels. Her idea of love includes all thrills and sensations—the secret love affair, the marriage without the guardian's consent, elopement and the news of it in the papers, loss of money due to non-compliance of the guardian in the marriage, and consequent idealization of poverty in which to live with her lover. All this is the imbecility of a spoilt child that Lydia is to the marrow of her bones. Even when she has fallen genuinely in love with Capt. Absolute her sentimental notions of love allow her to have him only as a poor ensign rather than as a general. Capt. Absolute knows this caprice of hers and therefore continues to indulge in the pastime of wooing her as Beverley—the half-pay sub-lieutinent. To Mrs. Malaprop she poses a problem in her rebellious nature; to Capt. Absolute she is an enigma, because he has after all to reconcile her to his true self of an heir to Sir Anthony. Her foolish copy-book—romance often lends into self-made troubles. Seeing that she might never have an occasion to feel the thrill of a lover's quarrel, she picks up one by writing a letter to herself in her friend's name, accusing Beverley therein for faithlessness.

A further proof of her foolish sentimentality in love is gained when she discovers the truth about her Beverley. She is furious at Capt. Absolute and dismisses him with curses and romantic fury. Neither the ingenious admonitions of her lover nor his pretended coaxing win her over for the time being. This gives her an opportunity of sentimental self-pity. Her description of her trouble is more amusing than pathetic. "There had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements! so becoming a disguise! so amiable a ladder of ropes! Such paragraphs in the newspapers.—Oh! I shall die with disappointment"! She is most shocked by the fact that instead

of a secret runaway marriage, she will have to marry a man of her aunt's choice and do it like any other common girl—with bridal procession, witness and the priest giving a regular licence of marriage. This, she is afraid, will be an anti-climax to her dreams of thrills. God so disposes the things that she has to come to that.

The fact that she reconciles herself at last to a prosaic marriage shows that she has genuine love for Capt. Absolute after all. Her foolish romantic notions and light-heartedness never gave an opportunity to her to find that out. Once she has rejected him apparently, she starts realizing his worth and her own love for him. An indication of that lies in the fact that she half-expected to be reconciled to him by Julia's admonitions "I believe one lecture from my my grave cousin will make me recall him". In the end, the news of the danger to Capt. Absolute's life touches her heart and she at once fully understands her own love for him. She, not only starts impatiently for the place of the duel but prepares herself in the way for the reconciliation which comes directly and smoothly. She gracefully wins the love of Absolute and the sympathy of all, including the audience.

(vii) Julia

Julia is the heroine of the sub-plot in the play and has been painted as a decided contrast to the sentimental Faulkand and the romantic heroine of the main plot—Lydia. While Lydia is absurdly romantic and fickle, Julia has a common-sense appreciation of the situations and is steady in her love. In contrast to her friend and cousin, she is very sober and forgiving, whereas Lydia is imperious and silly.

She loves Faulkland with all her heart. As he suspects, it in not due to her father's wish or her gratitude at his saving her life, that she has come to love him, though she does not deny that these factors have naturally strengthened her bond. She develops into a typical oppressed heroine, suffering for long the undeserved tortures at the hands of her capricious lover.

This forms one of the main characteristics of hers. She submits without grudging, under the tyranny of Faulkland,

whose trials and tests of her sincerity are not only troubling and trying but are a direct and intolerable insult. She repeatedly gives proofs of her sincerity in love ond is prepared to go with him anywhere under the sun if that would be of any service to him. One may almost find her little late in resenting Faulkland strongly. In her indulgence for her lover she appears self-contradictory, when having told Lydia that she does not tolerate the caprices eveu of Faulkland, she comes out to condone his faults by the excuse: "His affection is ardent and sincere; and as it engrosses his whole soul, he expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his". She gives another excuse of her lover's silly behaviour, when she again expresses a similar opinion of Faulkland's nature. She is rather his debtor "for those imperfections, which arise from the ardour of his attachment".

But when Faulkland carries his suspicions too far, even her patience comes to an end and she repudiates him with considerable spirit. Her sense of self-respect compels her to dismiss him as a lover yet she promises never to accept any-other suitor. That indeed is real love!

Julia has a lot of commonsense and prudence. She very rightly advises Lydia not to reject a sincere lover like Capt. Absolute simply because she will not be able to fulfil her dream of a runaway marriage in accepting him. She knows full well that there is nothing wrong in being happy and gay, even when away from her lover. Unlike Faulkland's sentimental morbidity, she lets herself be lost in dancing and music. As Acres reports to Capt. Absolute and his friend, she behaves just like a normal healthy girl.

She also gets her reward in the end as many others do, to live ever after in happiness. Faulkland is cured of his suspicions and caprices and she is only too glad to accept the changed man again for she ever has sincerely loved him. Quite in keeping with her over-serious convictions, in the end of the play, she gives quite a sermon, in the artificial diction of the sentimental works of the age, on the topic of virtues in married love. She also along with Capt. Absolute is the character, that has not been caricatured or satirized. Consequently she remains one of

the dull and uninteresting personalities of this farcical comedy.

(ix) Fag

Fag is the stock figure of comedy since Plautus and Jerence, the faithful servant trying to serve his master's interests in every possible way. If he is a little roguish and lies even with his master, it is excusable since he means no harm at least to him.

Fag provides quite a good bit of humour in the play by his attempts to copy his master's elegance, smartness, fashions and wit. He imitates him in season and out of season. He shows some intelligence in his cunning behaviour but none in remaining ignorant of his foolish apings. He boasts of his superiority before Thomas, who is completely overwhelmed by his fellow-servant. Thomas is patronizingly called by his name Fag, who is himself addressed by his friend as Mr. Fag. He does not shake hands with Thomas with his gloves on nor does he wear wig any more. He tries to be chivalrous and polite with the ladies when he ought to be directly outspoken. He does not know how tediously impatient he has made them.

He is, however, cunning enough to serve his master's ends. He has the honour of being his master's confidant along with Faulkland. He thoroughly understands Sir Anthony that he is imperious and hasty in everything. He improvises a convincing lie as an excuse for his master's presence in Bath and thus saves him. He is clever enough to get the secret of Lucy that Capt. Absolute has been proposed as a match for Lydia. It is real gladness, which he feels now and he at once runs to his master to apprise him of the happiest news. He keeps a constant watch on the interests of his master and along with David becomes instrumental in saving him from the dire catastrophe of the duels.

From his long association with his master, he has acquired a sense of fun and wit that has been thought a little unnatural for one of his station. He is gay and merry like his master and has been fully enjoying the pleasures of Bath. He rather gets angry that they have nothing more to enjoy in Bath after eleven in the night. His wit, though not equal to the higher characters in the play, proves quite overwhelming for the minor ones like Thomas and Lucy.

(x) David :

David is the personal servant of Bob Acres and contrasts well with Fag, in his qualities of a simple country-bred fellow. He loves the things which have a stamp of country life, dress, fashions, weapons and even oaths. He does not feel at home in Bath where intrigues and duels predominate.

He has ample common-sense and reasons with his master against fighting a duel with convincing arguments. He can appreciate fighting with a staff or a cudgel but sees no fun in risking one's life in fighting with swords and pistols. He does not want to take care of his honour if his honour does not take care of him in endangering his life.

Like Fag, David is also sincerely devoted to his master. He is keen to take him back to his mother in his country-house, safe and sound. Acres' safety is his supreme consideration. He admires his master quite encouragingly when he decorates himself in the fashions of beaus and fops but is also anxious about it for he slyly comments that Acres' style of dress will soon be on sale at Bath. David's sincere concern for his master's welfare is brought out twice. The first time when he tries hard to dissuade him from fighting a duel. He even takes liberties with his master in suggesting that he will never succeed against his adversary. He curses Sir Lucius as "blood-thirsty". He thus shows not a little intelligence in clearly understanding the true nature of both Acres and Sir Lucius.

The second time, David proves of vital service to his master is when he, along with Fag, informs Sir Anthony and the ladies, Mrs. Malaprop, Lydia and Julia, that fatal consequences are ahead since their friends are going to fight duels. Thus it is the servants, among them also David, who save the tragedy.

As a whole, David is a delightful character who, with his oaths and innocent country-bred manners, provides many occasions for humour. He is not cunning and witty like Fag, but is simple and straightforward in his honesty.

(xi) Lucy :

Lucy is the feminine counterpart of Fag, in being a cunning and roguish maid. She is the confidante of her mistress, keeps

secrets like Fag, but unlike him she cannot be trusted with them nor does she care whether they flourish or are thwarted. Her own interest is the uppermost in her mind all the time, come what may.

She conceals her cunning nature under the mask of simplicity. She laughs heartily at the fact that the so-called superiors believe her to be a simpleton. How much she prides herself that she has been extracting money from all without ever etting anyone discover herself. She receives money from Lydia and Capt. Absolute to keep silent over their secrets and from Mrs. Malaprop to do the same as well as to tell her the secrets of others. Even from the cunning old Sir Lucius she squeezes money by duping him into the belief that his Delia is Lydia—the niece and not her aunt.

She is also something of a flirt and a coquette. She must have encouraged Sir Lucius to kiss her whereas she shows apparent resentment at it.

She is important to the play for she entangles the plot by her lies and by acting a go-between among lovers. It is she, who supplies the valuable news to Fag, who rather proves superior to her in cleverness, about Capt. Absolute being encouraged by Mrs. Malaprop to be Lydia's suitor with Sir Anthony's acquiescence. She is again inferior to Fag in not being able to ape the manners and fashions of her mistress. A proof of this lies in the fact that although she must have been in Lydia's service for quite long she takes *Sal volatile* to be the name of a book.

It is rather strange that this conscious villain has not been painted in the awkward p sition, embarrassingly trying to explain her conduct, after her villainies were discovered. She is made to quit the scene quite earl in the play and we are deprived of enjoying her pranks and tricks any more. Her importance in the plot is simple in its exposition and complication.

17. An Outline of the Plot

Act I—Scene I

While loitering in a street of Bath, Fag, personal servant of Capt. Absolute, unexpectedly meets Thomas, the coachman

of Capt. Absolute's father, Sir Anthony Absolute. On enquiry from Fag, Thomas tells him that Sir Anthony, along with his ward Julia Melville, has only then arrived at the city; the reason of this sudden and hasty arrival being Sir Anthony's fear of another attack of gout. While Thomas learns that Sir Anthony's son is also in Bath, he tells Fag that the father will certainly be very much surprised to see the son at Bath at that time. In a friendly confidence Fag also gives out the secret about his master to Thomas. He tells Thomas that his master Capt. Absolute has been paying his addresses to a celebrated beauty of the town, Lydia Languish, who is a rich heiress too. The Captain, however, pursues his love not in his own person but as Ensign Beverley, a poor half-pay sub-lieutenant. He has to act in this way because his ladylove has a singular romantic whim of wanting to be courted by a poor romantic ensign rather than by a rich general. Since Capt. Absolute is the son and heir to a rich baronet Sir, Anthony, he has to act a poor man to satisfy the fancy of Lydia. Everything else is going on smoothly except the fact that there is an 'old tough aunt' in the way, like a fly in the ointment. While talking to Thomas, Fag suddenly sees his master and immediately begs leave of Thomas to tell him the news of his father's arrival.

Act I—Scene II

The scene opens with Miss Lydia Languish, the beloved of Capt. Absolute (Beverley) and the niece of 'the old tough aunt' Mrs. Malaprop sitting on a sofa in the dressing-room of Mrs. Malaprop's lodgings in Bath, with a novel in her hand. Lucy, the maid-servant of her aunt, has just come back after ransacking all the circulating libraries at Bath, for cheap romances and worthless novels. Lucy takes out books from under her cloak and from her pockets and her mistress looks at their titles only by one, also enquiring about the others she has not brought. Lydia has a large fortune to be inherited only if she married with the consent of her aunt and guardian Mrs. Malaprop. She, however, has determined to do just the opposite, since her head has been turned by too much reading of these romances. She has been planning a romantic elopement and a secret marriage with a poor lover (Beverley), thus deliberately losing her wealth. While Lydia has been scanning

the books brought by Lucy, Julia, the friend and cousin of Lydia and Sir Anthony's ward, comes there to pay her a visit. Lydia learns from Julia that Sir Anthony is soon to arrive there to wait on Mrs. Malaprop. Then the two friends talk about their love-affairs and confide in each other the story of their respective miseries. Lydia tells Julia that her aunt has lately intercepted a letter of them and thus discovered her connection with Beverley. Since then she has confined her to her room, wile she herself has been indulging in a secret amorous correspondence with an Irish baronet (Sir Lucius O'Trigger) under a feigned name. She further informs Julia that Bob Acres, a suitor, encouraged by her aunt to pay his addresses to Lydia, is to be in Bath that day and the man is quite odious to her. The worst of Lydia's woes however is the lover's quarrel which, she tells, she has deliberately picked up with Beverley in order to enjoy the thrill of it. Beverlev, however, seems to be too much angered with it for he has not come to pay her a visit since. Julia, in her turn, tells her friend that her capricious and sentimental lover Faulkland has been doubting her love as much as ever, though for herself, she has been very much devoted to him, both by love and gratitude since he once saved her life. They are now interrupted by Lucy who brings the news of Sir Anthony's arrival on the scene. Since they may enter the room any moment, Julia leaves her cousin in haste, and Lydia hurriedly thrusts her romances under the pillow or hides them elsewhere while she opens some religious books and sits reading them. As Mrs. Malaprop enters the room with Sir Anthony, she greets her niece with a rebuke and calls her a 'deliberate simpleton.' She asks Lydia to get rid of her romantic fancy for the worthless Beverley and come round to accept a husband of her aunt's choice. With a show of vanity and self-importance Mrs. Malaprop lectures her niece on what becomes a young woman and what does not. While she speaks on, she gets all her consciously brought big words wrong, but still she feels proud of her vocabulary without ever knowing her absurdities. In reply to her scoldings Lydia shows a very defiant attitude and refuses point blank to obey her. At this she is asked to get out of the room which she angrily does. Lydia's fancy to marry a poor ensign and her disobedience are attributed by Sir Anthony to her education. He expresses very decided views on the subject of female education. To him

it is good to teach a girl the black art as the alphabet. Mrs. Malaprop also takes part in the debate and in her usual mala-a-propos style, enumerates a long list of the subjects she will like the girls to be taught. Even when they differ on the subject of a girl's education, they agree on another matter of business. Sir Anthony agrees to call his son to Bath and set him up as a candidate for Lydia's hand, Mrs. Malaprop agrees to this and promises to dismiss another suitor Bob Acres, whom she has so far encouraged. In the meanwhile she will subject Lydia to most rigorous watch. Sir Anthony will even like to put her under lock and key and make her go without food for a couple of days in order to bring her round. Sir Anthony now leaves well satisfied and Mrs. Malaprop calls Lucy to enquire whether she gave her last letter to Sir Lucius. She asks her to keep her secret safely and bribes her as a reward. It seems she is thinking of another marriage at this age. When left alone, Lucy feels elated at her success in deceiving those around her. She triumphantly enumerates the names of all the persons who take her as a simpleton, entrust their secrets with her, and bribe her to act as a go-between. Lydia, Beverley, Mrs. Malaprop, Bob Acres and Sir Lucius have all contributed to her purse yet have not been faithfully served.

Act II—Scene I

Having been informed by Fag that his father has arrived in Bath, Capt. Absolute asks his servant to go to him and enquire when it will be convenient to him to see his son. Fag tells him that Sir Anthony has felt very much surprised at his son's presence in Bath and he has already told him many improvised lies as an explanation. He asks his master to keep his lie consistently—that he came there to recruit. Just then Faulkland comes there depressed and melancholy. Capt. Absolute enjoys his sentimental concern for Julia's health and happiness. The Captain at first does not tell him that his beloved Julia is already in Bath and relishes his idle effusions. Then as soon as Faulkland is told that Julia is there and all health and spirits, he gets overjoyed with the news. He at once starts to see Julia but is held up by the arrival of Bob Acres, a country squire and a friend of Capt. Absolute, who introduces him to Faulkland. When Faulkland learns that Acres has been living in the neighbourhood of Julia, he asks

him about Julia's health. Acres enthusiastically relates to him how Julia has all along been happy and gay and has been dancing and singing at concerts and balls. On learning that Julia has been so happy even in his absence, Faulkland gets jealous and suspicious of her and blurts out angry remonstrances. Capt. Absolute enjoys his mad flurry and further annoys him with his comments, at which he leaves them suddenly. Now Acres tells Absolute how Lydia used to express her dislike for him due to his country-side dress and manners and resolves that he will certainly wear fashionable dress in future and learn polished manners. This he will do to impress Lydia and to fill his rival Beverley with fear. Fag now announces the arrival of Sir Anthony Absolute. Acres makes his exit, since he expects a letter from Mrs. Malaprop any time and a visit from his friend Sir Lucius O' Trigger. As Sir Anthony comes in, he expresses his surprise at his son's presence in Bath, but then the very next moment he informs him that he has soon to marry a rich heiress of his father's choice. He does not tell who the girl is. Capt. Absolute naturally refuses to comply with this, because he has already promised his love to a girl of his own liking. At this Sir Anthony gets into a rage and threatens to disinherit and disown his son if he does not agree to marry the girl of his choice even if she might be the ugliest upon the earth. The son is somewhat puzzled at the unexpected predicament, but firmly refuses again to obey his father, at which he goes out in a frenzy threatening his son to disown him and never to call him 'Jack' again.

Act II—Scene II

Lucy, the maid-servant of Mrs. Malaprop is looking after Sir Lucius to hand over to him the letter from her mistress, written under the romantic name 'Delia'. Lucy has mischievously duped Sir Lucius that Delia is the niece and not the old Mrs. Malaprop, and Sir Lucius has believed her. Lucy discovers Sir Lucius walking restlessly on the North Parade and delivers him the letter. Sir Lucius reads the letter with gusto and enthusiasm and slyly comments on the inappropriate use of words in it. Lucy uncautiously calls her mistress a lady of much experience, thus half betraying the

secret but soon manages the situation with a convincing explanation. Sir Lucius bribes Lucy with enough money and gives her quite a few kisses into the bargain. They are interrupted by the arrival of Fag on the scene. Fag extracts from Lucy the secret that another suitor Capt. Absolute has been recommended to Lydia by her aunt. The news gives genuine joy to Fag, who rushes at once to convey it to his master. Ensign Beverley and Captain Absolute thus become the rivals.

Act III—Scene I

Having learnt from Fag that Lydia Languish, his sweatheart is the very girl his father and desired him to marry, Capt. Absolute at once decides to seek his father and tell him that he is ready unconditionally to obey his dictates in everything. Luckily he soon finds his father on the North Parade and acting superbly the penitent son, offers him his apologies, promising to submit his own happiness to his father's pleasure. Sir Anthony is at once all forgiveness and gives out to his son the name of Lydia whom he has to marry. Capt. Absolute pretends ignorance about Lydia's name and also about her aunt Mrs. Malaprop, nor does he seem to remember having ever met them. Now Sir Anthony with rapturous delight and enthusiasm describes to his son, the charms and attractions in Lydia, in which also Capt. Absolute shows little or no interest since to please his father, he can marry even the ugliest lady. Sir Anthony, at last, asks his son to go to Mrs. Malaprop, with a letter of introduction from him and through her to pay his addresses to Lydia. Father and son thus depart together, both fully satisfied.

Act III—Scene II

Faulkland comes to pay a visit to Julia and sits in her dressing-room waiting for her. He is blaming his capricious and suspicious nature which not only tortures him with doubts and jealousies but also pains his beloved. As Julia enters the room greeting him warmly he shows tenderness and love to her, but soon his warmth turns into coldness and his whims come to the forefront. He starts upbraiding her for being a little too happy and gay in his absence. His absurd idealization of love prompts him to object to Julia's mention of gratitude

to him for having saved her life. Similarly handsomeness, wealth or position should have no consideration in true love according to Faulkland. When Julia tries to prove her sincerity in love by saying that she has met more handsome men than he, and yet she loves him, Faulkland's jealousies are aroused and he lectures her on the characteristics of true love. Now Julia feels that her lover's tyranny has reached an intolerable extreme and she is so exasperated that she leaves the room in a flood of tears. Faulkland stays back expecting her to return, but when she does not, curse himself for having treated so gentle and loving a girl like an uncultured brute.

Act III—Scene III

Capt. Absolute calls on Mrs. Malaprop with a letter of introduction from his father and is heartily welcomed. He flatters Mrs. Malaprop with high tributes to her learning and accomplishments so as to dupe her later for his benefit. She tells Absolute about Beverley, with whom her niece is in love and who will therefore be his rival. She produces a letter from Beverley addressed to her niece, and intercepted by her. In the letter, as it is read by Absolute, she is described in the most derogatory and malicious terms and her misuse of words is censured. In it Beverley has mentioned a plan to make her a go-between in their interviews. Mrs. Malaprop laughs at this and so calls Lydia to meet Capt. Absolute. They are left alone. Lydia, however, discovers there her own Captain and is surprised to the extreme. She feels romantically elated when told that her lover has over-reached her aunt into believing that he was Capt. Absolute, while he has kept away the real Captain by some trick. They now talk to each other affectionately and plan a possible elopement. Mrs. Malaprop stands eavesdropping and overhears from Lydia that she will ever be faithful to her Beverley, whomsoever her aunt might choose for her. She sees Capt. Absolute kneeling before Lydia to enforce his suit and concludes that perhaps Lydia has jilted and rejected him. So she immediately intervenes and rebukes Lydia to her heart's content for her impertinence and bad manners in telling the worthy suitor to his face that she would have another. Thus the interview finished with satisfaction to Lydia that she has met her Beverley and with

the illusion to Mrs. Malaprop that Lydia has rejected Capt. Absolute, Only Capt. Absolute knows the real position as manipulated by him.

Act III—Scene IV

Acres stands before his servant David, who is overwhelmed at the foppish appearance of his master in the dress of up-to-date Bath fashions. Acres has been practising French dances at his lodgings and is at present waiting for his French master, whom he finally asks David to summon. As David leaves, he unsuccessfully tries to rub-up a few steps of foreign dances and in the meantime Sir Lucius calls on him. Acres confidentially tells him that he has been dismissed as a suitor for Lydia's hand by Mrs. Malaprop and that there is a gentleman of Beverley's name come forward as his rival. Although Acres thinks this treatment to be only unfair, Sir Lucius convinces him that this is insulting and disgraceful. So he should write a letter to Beverley challenging him to a duel for his honour's sake. Acres, even though essentially a coward, has to put up an honourable and brave appearance and so pretends to be roused to anger. Sir Lucius dictates, and Acres writes a letter to Beverley inviting him to meet him in a duel at King's Mead Fields, that very evening. Sir Lucius exchanges his secret with Acres and tells him that he also will be fighting a duel that very evening at the same spot with a "gay Captain", since he has made fun of him and his country and thus has offended him. Sir Lucius, then, goes out in search of his adversary.

Act IV—Scene I

When David learns that his master has decided to fight a duel with someone at the instigation of Sir Lucius, he is greatly upset. In good faith, he repeatedly requests his master to abandon the idea for neither is there any fun in endangering one's life for such an unstable thing as honour, nor is there any chance of his master winning a fight against anyone. He does not mind the country weapons like cudgels of staff but to think of swords and pistols; it will certainly be fatal for his master. The thought almost brings tears to his eyes. Acres, the swaggerer, affirms that he will certainly fight to save his honour, calls David a coward and dismisses him from his

presence. Captain Absolute now arrives and expresses surprise for having been called by Acres. Acres shows him the letter of challenge he has written to Beverley and asks him to act his second in the duel as well as to convey the letter to his adversary. Absolute expresses his inability to do the former but promises most amusingly to do the letter. Acres, therefore, instructs Absolute to try to make Beverley frightened of him, by describing to him Acres' awful courage and fighting spirit. Absolute feels amused at the interesting developments in his affairs and goes out promising to convey Acres' message.

Act IV—Scene II

Mrs. Malaprop once again tries to bring Lydia round to receiving Capt. Absolute's addresses favourably, but the obstinate girl refuses point-blank. As she is describing Capt. Absolute's handsome features to Lydia, the Captain himself along with his father is announced. As they come in, Lydia turns her face away from them and does not even once look at his new suitor, in spite of repeated rebukes and implorings from her aunt and Sir Anthony. Sir Anthony then goads his son not to keep dumb but to begin paying his compliments to Lydia. The son is utterly at his wits' end and does not know how to extricate himself out of this difficult situation. He requests his father to leave them alone believing that he might then manage things with convincing excuses, but the father refuses to budge an inch. He is compelled at last to speak in everybody's presence and he tries to speak in a hoarse and artificial voice for fear of being recognised. Soon, however, he comes to his own natural tone and then Lydia turns round and looks at him. She immediately calls him out as Beverley and the guardians are surprised. The game cannot be continued any more and the whole secret of his courting Lydia as a poor ensign is known to everybody. Lydia is mad with rage at being so mercilessly deceived by her own dear lover and almost breaks down with disappointment. All her dreams have at last come to a nought. Mrs. Malaprop looks very much offended that Capt. Absolute in the guise of Beverley wrote that insulting letter to her. Sir Anthony also taunts his son for all his past duping of him, but is inwardly happy at his son's romantic adventure. He tries to pacify Mrs. Mala-

prop's anger and persuades her out of the room. As the two lovers are left alone, Lydia looks frustrated and Capt. Absolute doesn't still know how to begin. He at first tries to humour her, but when it does not succeed, he even shows a bit of a temper. Lydia retaliates and goes to the extremity of throwing off her lover's portrait, and thus breaks off the engagement for good. Absolute admirably plays the part of a faithful lover and says that he will still love Lydia and none else. He hints that the world will laugh at Lydia and say that she must have been dismissed from her lover's favour. Lydia bursts into tears for she can no more contain her impotent rage and frustration. Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony now return and find Lydia weeping. They are hardly able to make out the situation and only conclude that the Captain must have behaved a little too boldly and impatiently, thus offending the delicacy of the fair sex. The idea is amusing to Sir Anthony for he thinks that the tendency is in the very blood of the Absolutes. Sir Anthony then goes out pushing his son before him, and leaving the aunt to make their peace with the niece.

Act IV—Scene III

Sir Lucius is looking for Capt. Absolute on the North Parade and is muttering to himself the wonder that the young girls should fall such an easy prey to young army officers. He locates Captain Absolute coming towards himself. The Captain is sad at his failure with Lydia and so talks in a desperate mood. Sir Lucius, who is out to pick up a quarrel with him as an excuse for challenging him to a duel, points out to him that his opinion differs from the Captain's and that the Captain has lately offended him, too. Absolute cannot understand this, but not knowing how to avoid him honourably, he agrees to take up his challenge. Sir Lucius asks Absolute to meet him at King's Mead-Fields at six that evening and to come prepared to fight with small swords as the light would be dim. As Sir Lucius leaves, there comes Faulkland, who is gladly welcomed and asked by Capt. Absolute to be his second in the duel. Faukland informs his friend how he has pained Julia with his suspicionsof her love and is, therefore, very much dejectd. A servant now brings a letter to Faulkland from Julia in which he has been requested to see her at the earliest. Even this happy initiative to a final reconciliation does

not cheer up Faulkland, who is duly pulled up by Absolute for it. Capt. Absolute asks Faulkland to be ready at six to accompany him and leaves him alone. Faulkland indulges in his fancies again and finally decides to give another test to Julia's love.

Act V—Scene I

Faulkland has sent a false message to Julia that he has been involved in a dreadful accident. Julia stands surmising what can it be, till Faulkland comes. She asks him the details and Faulkland, in order to test her faithfulness in love, tells her a cock-and-bull story that he has slain a man in a duel and should therefore immediately leave the country to escape punishment. Julia loses no time to take her decision to accompany him wherever he decides to go, to share his troubles and to comfort him in his exile. She will marry him there and make use of her right to serve her husband. Faulkland is fully satisfied with the outcome of the test and frankly admits to her that he has been only testing her love and the story of the disaster was all false. This shocks and pains Julia so very much that she at last loses all her patience with this incorrigible tormentor. She bitterly protests at her lover's behaviour, gets into a genuine temper and vows that she will never have anything more to do with him. As she goes out completely broken, Faulkland, as usual, curses his folly and is apprehensive lest he might lose such a priceless girl. He tries to call her back but to no avail; so he leaves, for he has to be at King's Mead Fields to act as Capt. Absolute's second in the duel. Now Lydia calls upon Julia and informs her that her poor ensign Beverley has turned out to be the rich Capt. Absolute. Julia has long known the fact from Faulkland and admits it to Lydia now, at which Lydia protests that everybody has been perceiving her all along. She expresses utter frustration at her romantic plans being of no avail, the elopement and a secret marriage now looking almost impossible. Julia, however, quite sensibly advises her to accept rather than reject such a faithful and handsome a lover as Capt. Absolute, and replace her romance with common-sense. Now Mrs. Malaprop, Fag and David rush into the room crying 'murder' and 'man-

slaughter'. The two girls cannot make out what they mean for Mrs. Malaprop only puts things upside down, Fag is politely long-winded and David has a simpleton's expressions. At long last the impatient Lydia and Julia gather that Sir Lucius, Bob Acres, Faulkland and Capt. Absolute are meeting at King's Mead Fields to fight duels and there is the impending danger of anybody getting killed. Mrs. Malaprop, Julia and Lydia leave for the place in haste led by Fag and David is sent in search of Sir Anthony to get him also to the duel spot.

Act V—Scene II

Capt. Absolute has hidden a sword under his great-coat and is waiting on the South Parade for Faulkland to go to the duel spot together. In the meanwhile Sir Anthony happens to come that way and seems now recognising and now appearing perturbed at the appearance of his son, who has muffled up his face. The son tries various ways to dupe his father and escape but Sir Anthony at last recognises him fully and pounces upon him with the suspicious enquiries. He touches the Captain on the chest and feels the hard substance under his coat. The sword falls down and the father looks askance at the son. The son manages to convince his father that he was only going to Lydia to press his suit and will assert that if she refused him, he will kill himself with the same sword then and there. Sir Anthony agrees with the scheme, though doubting if it will prove effective. As the son leaves his father and moves ahead, David comes running to Sir Anthony, shouting 'murder' and 'fire' all the way. As he reaches Sir Anthony he asks him to stop his son somehow for he was going nowhere but to fight a bloody duel. The son has, however, gone beyond their reach and Sir Anthony furious at his son's impertinence in lying to him, rushes towards the duel field, along with David.

Act V—Scene III

Acres and Sir Lucius have reached King's Mead Fields before their adversaries and are busy in deciding the preliminaries of the imminent duel Sir Lucius measures the length from where the duellists will aim and fire and Acres finding the distance too short, feels awfully afraid. He argues that he will prefer a longer distance and the side pose to facing

his opponent with full front and from quite near. As Sir Lucius calls that he can see their adversaries coming, Acres gets nervous to the extreme and half declares his intention not to fight. As Captain Absolute and Faulkland arrive, Sir Lucius ignorantly asks Faulkland, taking him to be Beverley, to prepare to fight Acres. When told that he is only a friend of Absolute, Sir Lucius asks him to act as Beverley's representative and it will make no difference. Acres, however, has got an excuse to escape the duel and therefore refuses to fight anyone else but the real Beverley. The real Beverley also now appears, for Absolute declares himself to be so. This comes as a further excuse for Acres to withdraw from the duel for he refuses to fight his own de r friend, although Sir Lucius insists upon his doing so and even Capt. Absolute is not unwilling. Sir Lucius, at this, dismisses Acres as a coward and not worth even his notice. Then he prepares to go ahead with his duel and draws his sword. Capt. Absolute also draws. In an instant Sir Anthony, and the three ladies Mrs. Malaprop, Lydia and Julia along with Fag and David, burst upon the scene and the fight has to be stopped. Sir Anthony enquires about the cause of the duel while Mrs. Malaprop implores them to desist from it and forget the past. She tells Capt. Absolute that Lydia was greatly concerned for him. Sir Lucius bluntly claims Lydia's favour, thinking that she was his 'Delia', who wrote the love-letters still in his possession. Lydia contradicts him and unhesitatingly avows her faith to Capt. Absolute and requests for his affections in return. Capt. Absolute is only t o happy, and he humbly but honourably begs pardon of Sir Lucius for any offence he might have given to him. Sir Lucius gracefully accepts his apologies but produces Delia's letters, desiring to know if they were not written by Lydia. Mrs. Malaprop does not contain herself any longer and not only confesses that she was impersonating an imaginary Delia but also indirectly hints that she would like Sir Lucius to propose to her. Sir Lucius has nothing but rejection on his lips, declaring that he will rather offer her to Acres and Capt. Absolute Sir Lucius also offers his apologies to Capt. Absolute and congratulates him along with others. To downcast Mrs. Malaprop's rescue, comes Sir Antnony, cheering her up for she still was in her blooms. The old aunt is quite bitter and dismisses all men as bar-

barians. Now only Julia and Faulkland remain to be reconciled, to which end Sir Anthony makes a request to the parties concerned. That is also soon achieved and they receive everybody's best wishes. Acres now invites all to the New Rooms for an evening's entertainment in honour of the newly-engaged couples. Sir Anthony is in high spirits and proposes to drink at night to the health of the young couples and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop. Capt. Absolute and Faulkland congratulate each other at their fortune and their fiancees also join them in the proceedings. The play thus ends happily.

SUMMARY AND CRITICAL HINTS

THE PREFACE

Why was it written : When Sheridan wrote *The Rivals* (1774), he was only twenty-three and had little experience of the stage. On the dav of its first production, the play failed due to its inordinate length, particularly the Julia-Faulkland episode and the poor performance of certain actors. Sheridan withdrew the play, pruned it, and restaged it after an interval of eleven days with a new actor in Sir Lucius' role. This time it was a tremendous success and has continued to be so ever since. Encouraged with his success, Sheridan added a new Prologue to the play on the tenth night of its presentation and later on wrote a preface as an apologia explaining the reasons of the play's earlier failure and thanking all those concerned with its success. The preface was primarily intended for the arm-chair readers and not for those who saw the play performed on the stage.

Main Ideas in the Preface : Sheridan begins by saying that a Preface is to the reader what a Prologue is to an audience in the theatre—a kind of request for their favourable and indulgent appreciation of it. But a play by its very nature is primarily a thing for the stage and not for the closet ; so if a play has already established its success with the audience in a play-house it is a proof of its merit, which needs no more requests for recognition. If, on the other hand, a play has failed on the stage, no amount of supplementary explanations can get the favour of the closet readers for it. Thus a preface to an unsuccessful play is nothing but a useless prolonging of a law-suit with renewed pleadings in spite of the weakness of the suit. In Sheridan's case, the play had unexpected acclamation from the audience and so there was hardly any need

for a preface, but he wrote it for explaining an unusual circumstance associated with its failure and consequent success.

This circumstance refers to the withdrawal of *The Rivals* after its first performance, cutting down of certain scenes, removal of certain other errors and its final success. Sheridan wants in the Preface humbly to admit and explain the errors, to reply to his unjust critics and to appeal to critics, not to implicate anyone else but himself for its failure.

Sheridan admits that the play did have not one but many errors. All these he candidly attributes to his weakness of judgment and inexperience in the line of writing and staging plays. He is only twenty-three yet and one can hardly be expected to be an expert in the art of playwriting at this early age. Some people may say that in such a case Sheridan should not have written a play at all. He, however, rejects such a plea. Experience will come in due course ; what is to be seen is whether he has a capacity to be a playwright. Sheridan rightly feels he has enough promise and testifies it with the favour the audience has already shown to him in allowing him to represent his play after required corrections.

It has also been said, says Sheridan, that the managers could have removed beforehand some of the defects of the play *e.g.* its inordinate length. He wants to absolve the managers of this unfair criticism. When the play reached the hands of Mr. Harris, the manager of the Covent Garden Theatre, it was double the length of an average comedy. Other good plays being not available, he was in a hurry to stage it. Still he advised the dramatist to prune it at many places and himself made other corrections. He was, however, not keen to discourage a novice by cutting down many more passages, since he had already removed many. Sheridan knew all this but decided to correct other errors, only after seeing the outcome of the first performance.

As for the charge of plagiarism, he had already anticipated and taken precautions to avoid it. His little knowledge of plays proved to him a blessing in disguise. Whereas it left him ignorant of the art, it did not fill up his brain with the memories of his past readings in other people's plays. He could invent and improvise freely and without the impression of

imitating anyone. If he had read a lot of plays, "faded ideas" from them would have floated in his "fancy like half-forgotten dreams" and appearing in his works would have put in doubt his originality.

The criticism of the public on the first performance of the play, says Sheridan, produced in him a sense of surprise not because he had no faults but because he could not earli r see them even when these were so very obvious. He also affirms that the criticism of the public must have been motivated by true sympathetic judgement and not by malice. Even if some of it was, it is futile to retort ; for neglect is the best cure for it. As a playwright he regards the first night's audience also sacredly judicious and respects its verdict.

The puny critics, Sheridan believes, are not even worth his notice. They usually scatter their venomous criticism out of ill-will, malice and jealousy for the author. They are worse than even the worst among the authors.

Sheridan denies that he intended any attack on the Irish character, in the portrait of Sir Lucius O'Trigger. If there are any such pratiotic Irishmen taking offence on that issue, he is rather thankful to them ; because even though the play was condemned in many ways, if it has only been able to arouse the nationalist spirit in Irishmen, he considers it enough success.

In the end, Sheridan indulges in the formality of thanking all those who have been associated with the successful staging of *The Rivals*. The performers won the applause from the audience but the contribution of the principals of the theatre is not so apparent to the public and so it becomes the duty of the playwright to make it so. He not only confesses their generosity and helpfulness shown to himself but also recommends them and their theatre to the future talents among the playwrights.

The Preface as a piece of self-criticism : It is usually not possible for an author to see his own faults as clearly as Sheridan does in his Preface to *The Rivals*. He not only understands his failings but also cordially admits them and promises to correct them to the best of his ability. He appeals to the indulgence of the readers as humbly as he did in the Prologue to the audience in the theatre. The occasion for the Preface

came because after his success on the stage it was befitting to try it with the readers in the closet and with such readers the Preface formed the direct link. After the first failure and the consequent pruning came the unexpected success of the play—providing an unusual circumstance in the history of *The Rivals*. Sheridan rightly takes the opportunity in the Preface to explain his weaknesses and failings and to reply to the unfair attack of the critics. This he does with a humility and dignity that becomes him.

A young, inexperienced playwright has a great variety of people to please and satisfy—the business-minded managers, dominating actors, the jealous critics and a motley public. Sheridan knows the difficulty and is out to surmount it in his Preface, for without such initial efforts it is not usually possible to establish one's hold upon the agencies that accord success to a play. Sheridan does not do it at the cost of his conscience but quite sincerely. He does not retort to his malicious critics ; all he does that way is to give certain sarcastic remarks and insinuations against them. He is as much on the defensive as in a mood to attack them. He has been further emboldened in the attempt by his unusual success with the audience, the verdict of which is final, respectable and effective

It is because he is shielded already that he frankly admits all his mistakes in the fresh presentation of the play. He does not want that the manager, Mr. Harris' the performers or other principals in its production should get any blame. He declares that he is responsible for all the mistakes and is certainly very thankful to all those that helped his play to success. It is convincing to remark that many of the weaknesses are often condoned with the excuse of inexperience. Sheridan admits his inexperience in the line and seeks favour and sympathy for himself. At the same time he is presently conscious of the dramatic talent in himself and says so proudly and firmly. The success of *The Rivals* was already a proof of it when Sheridan wrote the Preface ; but later on a surer proof also came with the production of *The School for Scandal*.

Sheridan also shows a certain psychological ingenuity when he calls the audience his most estimable critic for his play stands or falls by its judgement, whereas on the professsonal

critics he has some intelligent attack to make. Malicious critics he refuses to pay in their own coins, thus condemning them enough. At the puny critics scattering venom in the private circles, he looks from the position of superiority even though he is young and inexperienced. The clever politician that Sheridan came to be, is seen here in the makIng. His style is clever, rhetorical and satiric, the befitting prose-style for his purpose.

A little lapse of caution, in the Preface, has, however, brought a lot of brickbats at him from the critics. It is the utter uselessness of his defence against the charge of plagiarism. There was no necessity to make it even if the charge was already brought against him. His ignorance of other plays, he says, was an asset to him, because it kept away from his play any similarity of language, characters or scenes with other dramatists. He asserts that he is not well read in the plays of the past. The remark goes well as a humble confession but is unwise as a proud argument. Critics have tried to make capital out of it by pointing out in the play many similarities, and borrowings from other people's plays. Sheridan confesses that he is inexperienced and lacks maturity of judgement. He was right for he was unnecessarily shy of any parallelism in characters or situations that might be detected between him and others ; may they be accidental and unconscious or deliberate. Mrs. Malaprop, Sir Anthony, Lydia Languish—all their ancestors have been traced out, but what of that ? He ought to have defended himself by saying that all his borrowings, he had made his own. He was not living in a vacuum and it was inescapable to be affected by his age and the contemporary or old literature read by him. However, if Sheridan did not say so then, we, the cautious and enlightened readers of him, to whom he addressed his Preface certainly say so today and acquit him from the charge in which he might have been implicated due to the malice and jealousy of his contemporary critics.

The First Prologue

What is a Prologue ? The adding of prologue to a play has been an old custom with dramatists. It is usually in the nature of an appeal to the audience for a sympathetic acceptance

or a kind of introduction of the play detailing its purpose and nature. Prologues were mostly written in verse and were chanted or simply delivered to the public (the second Prologue of *The Rivals*), or were put in the conversational style to be presented by two actors (first Prologue of *The Rivals*).

The Allegory in the First Prologue : The First Prologue is Sheridan's simple and direct appeal to the sound judgement of the audience for a favourable acceptance of the play on the night of first performance. It is couched in the form of an allegory in which the audience has been compared to the Supreme Court, against the judgement of which no appeal to a higher Court is possible. The play is compared to the brief of a case which the lawyers prepare for arguing the case before the court. The brief of the case here has been made by a Solicitor, a lawyer of the lower rank, and is presented by him to a Sergeant-at-law, a barrister and a lawyer of the higher rank, who pleads the case before the audience as before the judges of the Supreme Court. "It may be worth noticing in connection with the form of the Prologue and the use of the legal terms," says Collins, "that Sheridan had not long before dabbled in the study of law having entered as a student of the Temple". So his fresh memories of the study of the law led him to adopt this scene of a court trial as a form for his prologue. The other charm of it was that it must have flattered the audience immensely to be considered the supreme judgement against whose judgement there is no appeal. It was necessary to flatter the audience for a favourable reception, although mere flattery in the prologue could not and did not conceal the demerits of the play. The play failed miserably on the first night of its performance.

In the first prologue the parts of the Solicitor and Sergeant-at-law were given to the two actors who appeared in the play. The Attorney's role was played by Quick who represented Bob Acres and Sergeant-at-law was played by Woodward who was Captain Absolute in the drama.

Summary of the First Prologue : A Sergeant-at-law first appears on the stage followed by an Attorney, who hands over a paper, *i. e.* the brief of the case to his senior. The Sergeant pretends that he is not able to read the hand since it is very

bad and illegible and he has not his spectacles with him. It is an indirect hint for the Attorney that the Sergeant will show no interest in the case without getting his fees. The intelligent Attorney takes up the hint and gives him money with the request to try to read the brief again. As the Sergeant makes a fresh effort to read the brief he finds that he can now read some of it as already; then he is given more money and he finds that the whole brief is now crystal clear. The Sergeant now hurriedly goes through the brief and finds to his surprise that it is poet's play, the cause of whom he might have pleaded even without any charge. The clever Attorney seconds his benevolence, accepting that he must have done the job without any fee and the offence of giving the fee should be wholly of the Attorney. He further tickles the vanity of the Sergeant by adding that it is not uncommon to get poet-lawyers meaning that the Sergeant himself may be one. The Sergeant, however, retorts that it might be good to be a poet, but poets are usually very poor people, so much so that many of them have to be sent behind the bars for not being able to pay back their debt. The Attorney rejoins that if a pleader has a poetic gift in addition to his clearness as a lawyer, he will rather make a better lawyer than otherwise. How nice will it be that his professional headdress wig is supplemented with bay leaves symbolic of a poet's vocation! The Sergeant makes fun of the Attorney's idea remarking that it is only on the sign-boards of inns and taverns that such funny pictures as wearing a long clumsy wig along with a laurel twig are painted. He asks the Attorney to tell his client, the poet, that the lawyer's profession is certainly better and more paying than that of a poet. The Attorney now finds it useless to go on arguing on the matter and asks his senior to come to business. He compliments the Sergeant on the grand appearance his legal outfit and asks him to rise to plead his client's case with the customary passionate arguing and graceful rise and fall in the tone. After making this request the Attorney leaves the stage and the Sergeant starts his pleadings of the case. He gives his own introduction as Sergeant Woodward, Counsel for the poet and produces brief in the support of his statement. He submits that he has a long experience of pleading cases on the floor of that court. This court—the audience, says the Sergeant—is a court much dreaded for there is no appeal

against its judgement ; it is not possible to deceive its judges by any tricks, or to employ means to make their judgement mild. Even the plea of a technical flaw in the trial cannot be taken so as to get permission for a retrial before another court *i. e.* a representation of the play at the only other theatre, Drury Lane. The Sergeant now cleverly flatters the Supreme Court judges, the members of the audience at the Covent Garden that they have been very kind and sympathetic to his client and have shown no signs of any prejudice or anger against him. Really speaking, they are some of the mildest judges he has ever faced. If it were not so it must have been very unfortunate for the poet because a show of disapproval from the audience is the very death of a dramatic's career. The members of the public at the Covent Garden, however, are so sympathetically disposed towards his client, that he is prepared to waive his right to appeal to any other theatre. All the members of the audience whether they are newsmen, professional critics or mere men of wit and learning, are welcome to pass judgement on the play. The fault, if any, should be his client's only, the worst of which can be that he has unsuccessfully ventured to please all. The final verdict of the success or the failure of the play he will judge by the general verdict and not by any particular person's opinion.

[As required by the restaging of the plav after a few days of its first night's failure, lines five to ten, from "Hey, How is this" to "No offence at all" of the original Prologue were omitted and ten fresh lines were inserted in their place. The summary of them is as follows.]

The Sergeant-at-law is surprised to see that the Attorney has brought to him an altogether new brief of the play, as it first appears to him. But he soon makes out that it is only a revised form of the old brief, the need for which might have arisen because of the play failing on the first performance. He assures the Sergeant that the play did not get a complete rejection. The judges did not strictly enforce the law in their case and acted with more than usual sympathy in not rejecting the play with severity. They allowed a second staging of the play after revision. The Sergeant enquires if the manv errors in the original brief have been suitably corrected. The Attorney

answers in the affirmative and adds that after revision, the brief almost appears to be a new one and therefore he has brought fresh fees for the Sergeant to plead his client's case with renewed vigour.

Critical hints on the First Prologue : The First Prologue to *The Rivals* presents to us Sheridan as a clever and courageous dramatist, who is determined to make a success in the line he has ventured to step in. Sheridan had been studying law at the Temple before he chose the vocation of a playwright. But he knew his talent was not in the law. The Prologue indicates that Sheridan was conscious of his capacity as a dramatist, and therefore tried to do all he could to attain success.

With this aim in view he tickles the vanity of the members of the audience by honouring them as the judges of the Supreme Court, against whose judgement there is no appeal. He humbly requests to get their sympathetic acceptance of the play declaring that it will be his very death as a dramatist, if they disapprove of it. He calls the judges mild and indulgent and does not seek to stage his play anywhere else, even if it fails before the Covent Garden public. Thus it is a clever and shrewd persuasion and it was quite proper and wise to make it so.

The study of law by Sheridan comes to him in good stead here in enacting an interesting and significant analogy between the staging of the play and the trial of the case in the court of law. It is almost an allegory which he fabricates comparing the play to the brief of a case and the judges to the audience. It must have satisfied the vanity of the author not a little, to use this legal terminology so dear to him and to an average Englishman.

But, is it not strange that in the same breath he should come hard upon the lawyers, iu which he felt proud to couch his prologue in the form of a court trial. His Sergeant-at-law is a figure thoroughly satirized, although he does so very good-humouredly and slyly. There is a lot of mild satire in the play also as it is seen here. It was the tendency of the age itself. Here, the first dig at the senior barrister is in showing him so particular in getting his fee in advance that without it he cannot even read the brief. Or is it the lawyer's cleverness as a

businessman ? There is no dearth of such lawyers even today. On getting the fee the scrawl immediately improves and on getting more fee it becomes wholly legible. The fun of it is that the kind lawyer would have done the poet's work even without his usual fee, only he did not know that he was going to be a poet's pleader today. He is impertinent enough to contrast the richness of the lawyers with the poverty of the poets not a few of whom do make a visit to Fleet Street prison for not being able to pay off their debts.

Though satirizing the lawyers, Sheridan does not go so far as to displease them, or for that matter displease any section of the public. He flatters all, as the impartial and mild judges, may they be newsmen, men of wit, or even the jealous critics. This clever generosity on the part of Sheridan did pay dividends for he was allowed to prune and correct his play and present it in the altered form for a retrial.

Restaging of the play also indicates that Sheridan was not discouraged with his first failure, although he was naturally disappointed. He felt sure that the play must succeed if he reshaped it. His wife wrote to him on hearing the news of the failure that she was happy at it, because she knew it was impossible he could make anything by writing plays. But Sheridan knew where the fault was and he corrected it. He knew his capacity and as the attorney says at the end of the Prologue, the recast play gave the appearance of almost a new play. Sheridan did make a great success of his play at last, and his success has come to stay.

The Second Prologue.

Why was it written? After the withdrawal of the play after first night, it was pruned and restaged on January 28th, 1775. As indicated in the First Prologue, where lines 5 to 10 of it were removed and another ten lines inserted on the day of reproduction, the revised play gave the appearance of quite a new piece. In its retrial the play was a tremendous success and ran continuously for fifteen nights which was not a common thing in those days. Elated by his great success, Sheridan wrote another prologue which was presented to the audience on the tenth night *i.e.* February 6th, 1775 spoken by the actress Mrs. Buckley who played the part of Julia.

Summary of the Second Prologue : Mrs. Buckley addresses the audience on behalf of the author and explains the reason of her appearance in place of the Sergeant and the Attorney in the earlier Prologue. She says that since their trial before the audience is over (they having won their case, for the play has already run successfully for ten nights) there is no more need for the lawyers to appear before them to plead their case. The client whose cause she is pleading, is not the author but the Muse of true comedy. She will describe to the audience the function and nature of true comedy and seek their approval of her view. She effects her cause by pointing out to the two figures, those of comedy and tragedy and by distinguishing between their true nature. In the figure of comedy are displayed her real characteristics, whereas the qualities of the sentimental comedy which seems similar to the figure of tragedy, are such that it appears to be no comedy at all. The face of the Comic Muse is attractive and charming since it is enlivened with the spirit of humour. Her cheeks are dimpled due to smiling; her eyes are beaming with joy. They are suggestive of a gay imagination which playfully expresses itself in hints of love and winning smiles. There is a light mask on her face which softens the piercing satire and conceals the blushes in her face, produced by the witty remarks she has been making. Her youthful appearance does not indicate that she is meant to teach morals ; preaching being the province of experienced persons only. Serious ideas do not appear well in her mouth. Her lips will utter no solemn sentiments ; their only language is that of mirth and love. Is it proper that we dismiss such a pleasing and enjoyable comedy and go to the sentimental Muse, the goddess with a sad and melancholy face. The signs with which she is adorned are all too pious and severely chaste like Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*. She has no human sentiments but is portrayed on wooden substance that is awfully dull. There she stands having perforce taken the rightful place of true comedy. She indulges in killing and bloodshed like the tragic Muse and makes her sympathisers shed floods of tears in its effort for forced pathos and sentimental moralising. If this type of comedy is allowed to flourish it will sound the death-knell of all comic spirit. Good comic actors and actresses in *The Rivals* instead of shining in their comic roles, will behave like actors in a tragedy and that will be the end of them.

The critics and dramatists should immediately raise their voice against the vogue of this type of comedy. True comedy lies in enacting of the light-hearted amusing scenes, which should not be expected to be enacted to preach moral laws or religious virtues. The cause of virtue and moral truths is flouted by persistent sinners ; the Muse of Tragedy creates circumstances which destroy such sinners and thus rehabilitate morality and virtue.

The Aim of the Second Prologue : Sheridan had two aims in view in writing the Second Prologue ; to discuss the true function and nature of comedy and to show the weaknesses of the sentimental comedy of his times. He was too young at the time of writing *The Rivals*, to be a theoretician but he had his own views on the subject. The age in which he was writing was the age of the triumph of middle class morality and sentimentality. The impulse was so strong that even Sheridan and Goldsmith, the two great rebels against it, could not entirely save their works from it, although in the man spirit of their plays they are vigorously anti-sentimental. When Sheridan's anti-sentimental play, *The Rivals* achieved an unprecedented success, he was certainly emboldened to view that his conception of comedy was the real one and the sentimentalised strain was false. He also wanted to educate the public that way and to indicate the truth of his nation. That is why he wrote the Second Prologue.

The first thing about true comedy, that he points out, is that it is a high entertainment full of humour and wit. In it gay imagination plays its wild pranks upon the heart of characters, who like to get into the tricks of love and mirthful jokes. Laughter rather than tears, humour and wit rather than pathos and sentimental effusions, light-hearted frivolity rather than serious moralising, gay mild satire rather than the sermonising on virtues are the things consistent with the spirit of true comedy. This is the next important point that Sheridan makes. True comedy has nothing to do with preaching morals or serious sermonising. The profound and fundamental passions of human nature are not its concern, nor are the legitimate weapons of tragedy like pathos or tears its method. The world of comedy should be a gay world in which the characters fleet their time as if in a golden world and indulge in mirth and gaiety, singing and dancing and wit and humour.

They also indulge in light satire and fun which is unadulterated with malice or bitterness.

In the second half of this prologue Sheridan denounces the Sentimental Comedy much in vogue in his day. This muse is a goddess of woeful countenance which least becomes the cheerful face of the Comic Muse. Melancholy and seriousness are the very life of sentimental comedy, for the aim of such comedy is to improve morals and indulge in pious sentiments. This cannot be done without a serious and severe face. Moralising as an aim is also unsuited to comedy for even if laughter in a comedy is used as a corrective, it only does so incidentally and never as its primary aim. Morals refer to the serious and profound principles of the conduct of life and profundity is the domain of tragedy. That is why the methods adopted by the sentimental comedy to achieve its aim are also borrowed from tragedy. Murder and bloodshed, tears and forced pathos are the legitimate weapons for tragedy but look entirely out of place in a comedy.

Hence, says Sheridan, there is the need that every critic and dramatist should take up the cause of true comedy and save it from dwindling into the sentimental strain. Sheridan himself was doing it in *The Rivals* and continued to do it in *The School for Scandal* and *The Critic.* He wanted many more to follow suit.

It will not be out of place to hint here why and how Sheridan came to possess such views and to whom was he indebted for them. It has very rightly been pointed out by critics that the spirit of Goldsmith's comedies goes back to the Shakespearean type, whereas the atmosphere in Sheridan's works is more akin to the Restoration comedies. Not the Elizabethans but the Restoration masters were the guide of Sheridan. Congreve and Farquhar had attracted him more than others. Their wit and brilliant dialogues are the very breath of Sheridan's plays. It is no secret that the Restoration dramatists delighted to pain even the immoral and licentious scenes for they were depicting a corrupt society. The sentimental comedy was a reaction against the excesses of Restoration masters. It won the battle because its patronizers, the middle class, had triumphed over the patronizers of the

Restoration comedy—the rich and licentious nobility of the Court. They had their own moral code and their hypo-critical conscience could be kept only with the pious moralizings and triumph of virtue over evil. This is what the sentimental comedy was exactly doing when Sheridan reacted against it. His contribution was that he brought back the spirit of Restoration Comedy minus its immoralities and other weak points. His conception of comedy as expressed in the Second Prologue is singular in this respect, otherwise it is the same as that of the Restoration masters.

Act I—Scene I

Summary : Fag, the servant of Captain Absolute accidentally meets Thomas, the coachman of Sir Anthony Absolute—the Captain's father, in a street in Bath. Fag shouts at Thomas and when he comes near asks him how was he being seen at Bath. Thomas tells Fag that his master along with his ward Miss Julia Melville and other servants has, only an hour ago, arrived at Bath. The reason for their sudden appearance there was only Sir Anthony's hasty temper. An idea that he might get another attack of gout very soon came to his head, and so he at once decided to come to Bath and they were off at a very short notice. Fag agrees that this was quite in keeping with Sir Anthony's hasty nature. Thomas now asks Fag how Captain Absolute was at Bath. Sir Anthony will certainly be surprised out of his mind to see his son there. Fag, who has acquired some of the wit of his master with long associations, now at first indulges in a short of equivocation and confounds the simple-minded Thomas, but later frankly confides to his fellow servant that his master was there courting, under a false name Ensign Beverley, a unique lady Lydia Languish. To Thomas it is quite a big surprise. If the Captain had to pass as somebody else why should he only choose the role of a poor ensign and not of a rich general, which in the normal course should be a greater attraction for the ladies. Fag now informs his friends about the romantic and capricious nature of his master's beloved who, he says, is a lady of very singular taste, since she likes a poor half pay ensign better than a general. She has her absurd romantic notions and in order to please and win her,

his master has to humour her thus. Fag now goes on to describe to Thomas with metaphor and exaggeration the immense fortune of Lydia Languish and remaks that she is very fond of his master. The only fly in the ointment, however, is her 'old tough aunt', who acts as her chaperon and is not favourable to their love.

Since Thomas has newly come to Bath, and he certainly considers Fag his superior in wit and knowledge, he themselves fully well there. Fag who has all the while speaking with a show of superiority over Thomas, now describes to Thomas the pleasures and fashions of Bath in a manner which likens him to his superiors in everything. He explains that he goes to the pumproom along with his master in the morning, where, however, they do not drink any mineral water, then (he speaks all along of himself in the same breath with his master) they go to saunter on the public walks or play the game of billiards. At night they go to dance and other amusements prescribed for the night. Affecting the airs of an important person, Fag remarks that he is now fed up with the place, since here they observe great strictness about closing all their entertainments at eleven in the night. Nevertheless, he enjoys himself in company with Faulkland's private servant Du. Peigne to whom he patronizingly promises to introduce Thomas also.

Fag now starts giving himself airs about the fashions and manners which he has acquired at Bath and in which he has left rustics like Thomas, miles behind. He asks Thomas to polish up a little and give up wearing wigs, which is a fashion now entirely out of date. Thomas, however, is an old-fashioned rustic that tries to stick to his traditions and is apprehensive of change. He does not like that lawyers and doctors should give up wearing wigs, but since they are doing so, he is afraid, coachmen may also follow suit. He on his part, will rather stick to it although he finds that the discarding of wigs has spread even to his village.

Suddenly Fag sees his master Captain Absolute along with Lucy, the maid servant of Lydia. He is seen giving her money, certainly to act as a go-between. Fag now hurries to meet the Captain and to tell him that his father has already

arrived at Bath. Before leaving Thomas he asks him to see him at Gyde's Porch in the evening to make up a party.

Critical hints : This is a typical opening scene of a comedy, done in a traditional and hackneyed style.The purpose of most if the opening scenes in the old dramas was expository, so is it here. It is thus a traditional opening scene. The method used for exposition is also traditional for Sheridan uses the servants of the main characters for the purpose. It is a method we can detect in many comedies of earlier periods. In a word, we can liken the use of servants to the function of chorus in Greek plays, which was to give information about the plot and comment on the characters and their actions. They do exactly the same here also.

In the expository part this scene gives most of the basic information needed for the further understanding of the action and the plot of the play. Although no protagonist appears here, we know where their fortunes stand at the time the play incorporates them. We know that Captain Absolute has disguised himself as Ensign Beverley and is courting a beauty of Bath Lydia Languish, in that name. The lady is also deeply in love with him. She is rich and romantic and it is to humour her romantic whim that Captain Absolute has changed his name and rank. The path of their love is, however, not smooth and there is an old tough aunt in the way. Similarly we know that Sir Anthony, a patient of gout has also come to Bath and will certainly be unfavourably surprised to see his own son there. Aart from the main plot, we get some information of the sub-plot also. Julia the ward of Sir Anthony is to marry Faulkland, and she also has arrived at Bath along with her guardian. The scene has also hinted at the next stage in the development of a plot—its complication. The course of love affair in the main plot is not to be smooth since there is the old tough aunt in the way and commonsense also hints that the whimsical singular lady will certainly not favourably react once the discovery about her lover is made. Sir Anthony will also "stare to see the captain here". Similarly the main qualities of the protagonists in the play have also been admirably hinted by the servants. Sir Anthony is "hasty in everything;" Lydia is "a lady of a very singular taste" who would love an ensign rather than a general ; and the old aunt is tough.

Although nothing is directly said about Captain Absolute we can certainly conclude a lot from his actions described by the servants. He is in Bath where he is not expected to be, is courting a lady with a singularly romantic taste and has taken up the adventure of doing so under a false name and character.

This scene of exposition also informs us a lot about the background of the play giving many references to Bath life. Fag faithfully describes the normal routine of every gentleman at Bath—visiting the pumprooms in the morning, then going to the walking grounds or playing of billiards, and dancing or similar other enjoyments in the night. It is exactly the type of gay, happy life of luxury and idleness described in the New Prose Bath Guide. The place was in its hey-day during the time of Sheridan and he has made a full use of its popularity. From Fag again we get some topical references to the changing fashions of the time ; for example the wearing of wigs was slowly getting into disrepute. Not only the rich classes of the city but also the ordinary people of the villages were discarding it as out of fashion, only the people in the lowest rank, such as coachmen, were holding on to it.

The scene also succeeds in arousing our curiosity to know the coming events. The affairs of the main characters in the play stand at an interesting stage here and we are naturally keenly desirous to know the final outcome *e.g.* of the Lydia-Beverley affair. Wit and humour of the scene, though mild, is well in keeping with the whole spirit of the play. The better examples of them, however, are yet to follow when the protagonists come on the stage.

Act I—Scene II

Lydia Languish, the niece and ward of Mrs. Malaprop, sits in her dressing room alone with a book in her hand. Her maid Lucy returns from her errand of getting books for her mistress, from the circulating libraries of Bath. The books that Lucy has brought are all romances or novels of the licentious and sentimental type which the young girls were very fond of reading and which Lydia is also mad about. The names of many such romances are on the finger tips of Lydia who enquires whether Lucy has brought them. Lucy expresses

regret that she did not get a few of them; however, she has brought many more which she takes out of her pocket and from under her cloak. There are also on the table some books dealing with moral subjects, but about them Lydia shows no enthusiasm. They are meant for some other purpose.

In the meanwhile Julia, the cousin and friend of Lydia, comes to pay her a visit. Lydia expresses a pleasant surprise at seeing Julia there and affectionately embraces her. On enquiry, Julia informs her friend that she came to Bath only an hour ago along with her guardian, Sir Anthony who will come to visit Mrs. Malaprop soon after changing his travelling dress. Now the two friends impart to each other their distress in love affairs. Lydia indicates that her aunt Mrs. Malaprop has discovered her connections with Beverley by intercepting a letter of his and as a consequence, has confined her. She herself has fallen in love with an old Irish baronet Sir Lucius O'Trigger and keeps a secret correspondence with him under a false romantic name Delia. Then, there is another worry for her; her aunt has been encouraging a suitor for her of the name of Bob Acres who is thoroughly odious to her. Since he will be in town that day, Mrs. Malaprop might thrust him upon her and that will be the death of her. But more than these things, what she is at present worried about is her quarrel with Beverley which she deliberately picked up some time ago. Being afraid lest she might never enjoy the thrill of a quarrel with her lover, she wrote a letter to herself under the feigned name of her friend, informing herself that Beverley has lately been unfaithful to her. Although she wanted to continue her tiff only for three days and a half, he has not turned up to see her since then and they are yet to be reconciled. Julia cannot understand why her friend should insist upon marrying a poor half-pay ensign. But Lydia's mind is made up. Her education from the romances has taught her many an absurdly fantastic notion. She dreams of an elopement and a runaway marriage against the will of her aunt, thus losing all her fortune. She will enjoy the romantic melancholy of living with her lover in poverty. Julia now in her turn relates her distress. Lydia is critical of Julia for tolerating her lover Faulkland's whims. She behaves with him like a slave when she ought to have been imperious

like herself Julia, does not agree with this. She replies that all her lover's caprices arise out of his great love for her. Their marriage has not yet been effected due to other circumstances than any lack of love on his part. It is his most ardent wish to marry her. He is generous and sincere and not jealous or proud, only he has rather a peculiar temper, that often tortures her. He wants to be loved as much as he thinks he loves her. She also loves him very ardently not because he once saved her life but because she had real love for him even before Julia expresses gratefulness to Faulkland for having saved her life but Lydia cannot see the logic of it.

The two friends are now interrupted by the arrival of Lucy, the maid-servant who informs them that Sir Anthony and Mrs. Malaprop are coming to see Lydia. Julia is unwilling to be seen there and so makes a hasty retreat. Lydia hurriedly hides her romances and novels here and there and displays books on morals and religion near her and on the table. Mrs. Malaprop enters along with her guest Sir Anthony and starts chiding Lydia outright, as a foolish hussy who is mad to marry a poor sub-lieutenant. Now Mrs. Malaprop's blundering display of vanity gets into full swing, and what with the inappropriate use of words and sermonising on what becomes a young woman and what does not; the scene provides a lot of fun at her cost. She wants Lydia to forget her Beverley altogether as she herself did her husband, soon after his death. Sir Anthony also joins in the denunciation of young girl's impertinence and disobedience and attributes all her faults to her education. To Mrs. Malaprop's request to accept a husband of her choice, Lydia retorts with a point-blank refusal and reiterates her faithfulness to Beverley, her own choice. Mrs. Malaprop's anger now suddenly rises high and she dismisses Lydia out of the room. Lydia readily goes out.

Left to themselves, the two old persons cannot but discuss Lydia's behaviour and its causes. Sir Anthony opines that female education is not only a waste but a positive harm. It is as good to teach a girl her alphabet as to let her learn the black art. He had seen their maid Lucy bringing books for her from the circulating libraries which he dubs as the trees of diabolical knowledge. Mrs. Malaprop does not agree with Sir Anthony that a woman should be denied all education. She

has her definite views on what are the subjects suitable for women. Then follows a long speech on what should a woman be taught, from Mrs. Malaprop. It is full of interesting 'Malapropism, and her efforts to display her learning and accomplishments. Sir Anthony feels amused at her blundering folly which goes to support his theory that efforts at female education pay no dividends. Their talk now centres on the most important matter of business. Sir Anthony has proposed that his son Captain Absolute should marry Mrs. Malaprop's niece Lydia and the old lady has agreed. She at once announces her decision to dismiss the claim of Bob Acres as a suitor. Sir Anthony promises to summon his son and to send him to court Lydia. To the old aunt's suspicion that the son might not agree with his father's choice, Sir Anthony replies with a sneer, remarking that the son can never dare disobey his father on the other hand, he will like Mrs. Malaprop to discipline her ward by hook or by crook. Sir Anthony even suggests such stern measures, as shutting her up under lock and key and starving her for a few days, to bring her round.

As Sir Anthony leaves, Mrs. Malaprop indulges in a soliloquy suggesting that she will be glad to marry Lydia away at the earliest, because she has discovered her love affair with Sir Lucius. She is sure her own maid-servant and trusted confidante Lucy has not betrayed her, for she seems to be such a simpleton that she is entirely incapable of it. She now calls Lucy and asks her never to disclose her secret letters to anyone. Lucy affirms her faithfulness to her mistress in most vehement terms. Mrs. Malaprop asks Lucy to take from her another letter for Sir Lucius, and she leaves the room. Lucy now expresses all her villainy in a soliloquy. She is overjoyed that she has successfully duped everybody into believing her and bribing her handsomely. She thinks it nice that others take her as a simpleton, for then, she can serve her interests more easily and profitably without any danger of being caught. She enumerates the long list of the items she has got as presents from the fools in love viz. Beverley, Lydia, Mrs. Malaprop, Sir Lucius and Bob Acres. She is particularly happy that she has overreached Sir Lucius into convincing him that Delia of his letter is not the old aunt but the charming niece Lydia.

Critical hints : This scene presents in a greater detail and

completes, what the opening scene had done in miniature, namely introducing the situation and characters as they stand in the beginning of the play. The scene brings the protagonists on the stage, about whom we had only heard in the earlier scene. Their relationships and troubles are now thoroughly described and further hints about their character are thrown. Apart from furthering and completing the *exposition* the scene also furnishes a little more of complication in the play and the action moves on with full speed.

In exposition we know that Lydia's affair has been discovered by Mrs. Malaprop by intercepting a letter from Beverley and that she is determined to foil their affair by bringing other suitors. We also learn of Lydia's firm resolve to marry none else but Beverley with whom she wanted to elope but for her foolish quarrel with him. The justification for the title is also given when in further complication of the plot Capt. Absolute is brought as a rival to Beverley and another rival Bob Acres is dismissed, who might take offence at it and do something to redress his grievance. We have known nothing so far about Julia and Faulkland except that they are betrothed. We now know that they are also not on happy terms with each other due to Faulkland's capricious and jealous nature although they are very much in love with each other. Lydia is the informant of another love interest in the play—that of Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Lucius, the complications of which are informed by Lucy who has duped the Irishman into believing that his Delia is the young Lydia herself. Thus these several threads of expanding complications in the plot bring to us a feeling of dire suspense that not only keeps alive our interest in the play but makes it engrossingly interesting.

About the main qualities of the protagonists, the scene furnishes a fund of information. Lydia and Julia form an admirable contrast to each other; the one a romantic, wayward, imperious and absurdly sentimental young hussy, the other sober, patient, realistic young woman. Both suffer in love but Lydia has brought it upon herself whereas Julia's tortures are her lover's doing. Faulkland's caprices, doubts and jealousies are conveyed through the conversation of the two cousins and we now perfectly know his humour. Fun and laughter arise from the behaviour of Mrs. Malaprop and Lucy. We learn

some of the best misuses of words from Mrs. Malaprop and see through her vanity in parading her learning. Her speeches almost verge on the farcical. Lucy comes before us as the typical villain, who serves her own ends at all costs.

There is quite a feast of fun and laughter, tricks and villainy in this scene. Lydia's absurdly romantic effusions, the old aunt's Molapropism's Sir Anthony's views on female ducation, Lucy's mischievous tricks, all provide humour and entertainment. Mrs. Malaprop's blunders create a situation similar to farce.

As in the earlier scene, in this scene also, a picture of Bath life has been provided. Young girls like Lydia read cheap romance and fancy themselves behaving like heroines in them. Elopement and runaway marriages are their luxuries. The hypocritical morality of their elders compels them to read books on sermons and religion which they really hate. A topical reference is also found in the opinion of the 18th century people about female education. Men like Sir Anthony are altogether against it, whereas ladies like Mrs. Malaprop, although favour the imparting of education, profit little from it and indicate what was its standard in the age.

Act II—Scene I

Captain Absolute asks his servant Fag to go to his father and enquire when will it be convenient to him to see his son. Fag tells his master that Sir Anthony was very much surprised to hear that his son was at Bath and had enquired how it was so. Fag had invented a convincing lie on the spur of the moment and told him that his master had come there to recruit. Captain Absolute is pleased with his servant's cleverness, although he is slightly suspicious of the truth of his statement. He now asks Fag to send his friend Faulkland to him. Faulkland comes down to Absolute in his room. He does not know that his fiance Julia has come to Bath and Captain Absolute withholds the information from him for the time being, to tease him. Absolute informs his friend that his quarrel with his lady-love has not been made up yet, although he hopes everything to be well soon. Faulkland suggests that it will be better to elope with her if she agrees to. But the captain will not do it for

fear of losing her fortune. In that case, suggests his friend, why should he not propose to her in his true character as the son and heir to a baronet. Absolute's sound judgement of Lydia's character prohibits him from doing even this, for he thinks, in such an eventuality he will lose Lydia altogether ; because Lydia will never like to be married with her guardian's consent and will also not like to marry a rich man. She must slowly be brought to a stage where she finds him indispensable ; then only will it be safe to disclose his identity. Faulkland is now invited to dinner by his friend but declines the offer on the plea that he is too sad and upset to be fit company in a dinner party. The cause of his sadness is his concern for the health and happiness of his beloved, Julia. Absolute criticises him frankly for his doubting and jealous nature, declaring that he himself prepares all his troubles and imaginary fears and fills his bitter cup with misery Unaffected by his scolding Faulkland prides himself on his ideal love, sincerer than that of his friend and devoted to only one person ; on the other hand, he thinks Absolute may turn from one girl to another without any qualms of conscience. Faulkland shows his absurdity to the extreme telling his friend that his concern for Julia is so great that even the smallest changes of weather make him apprehensive for her. Now Absolute tells him that Julia is perfectly well and is at the moment in Bath. Her lover is at once overjoyed with the information and sets off to see her. He is interrupted from going away by the arrival of Bob Acres on the scene, who on enquiry informs Faulkland that Julia has all along been enjoying perfect health and spirits and has been duly participating in dances and concerts on various occasions. Acres has been able to know this for he is a neighbour of Sir Anthony and has met Julia many times personally. This information arouses the jealousy and doubts of Faulkland who wonders that Julia should be so merry even in the absence of her lover. Separation from her lover should rather have made her melancholy and sad, instead of happy and gay enough to sing and dance. The more Faulkland complains about her and enquires the details of her merriments, the more Captain Absolute enjoys his caprices and ridicules him with insinuation and jokes. Acres not knowing the truth about him, goes on to describe Julia's beauty and charm, health and spirits

more and more enthusiastically though to the mortification of Faulkland, who imagines that while participating in the dances she must have inflamed the baser passions of the company. Faulkland cannot tolerate anymore and leaves them exasperated and shocked. Captain Absolute now befools Acres by remarking that he is certainly a very charming youth and the girls of Bath stand in a great danger of being ruined by him. Acres is too foolish to understand the hints behind all this and swaggers about his chances of success with Lydia. Ironically enough, he does not know that his own friend Captain Absolute is the rival Beverley. Acres goes on to boast that he is now the most favoured suitor of Lydia. Although she had a dislike for him before, now when he has curled his hair, and adopted the fashionable town dress she is head over ears in love with him. It only remains to get and punish his rival Beverley. Acres now piles oaths upon oaths of the original type and tells Absolute how he did not let even this genteel fashion of taking oaths escape him. He calls his oath *oaths referential* or *sentimental swearing*. Now Fag comes in and tells that the Captain's father Sir Anthony has come to call upon him. Acres immediately leaves after inviting the Captain to his lodgings at night.

Sir Anthony comes in and desires to know at once what has brought his son to Bath for he is not sure he is recruiting there. He, however, does not insist upon a reply and comes directly to business for which he has come. He wants to settle his son independently in life, now that he is old and will not live long to bother him. He will effect this by his marriage to a rich heiress very soon and after that it will be his son's and his wife's concern to decide whether he should continue in the army or not. Capt. Absolute is shocked and perturbed with this new trouble. He is not prepared to accept his father's proposal and insists that he will marry only the girl of his own choice. The father 'Absolute' as he is by nature, gives vent to his frenzy and imperious effusions and orders his son to obey him directly. The son refuses again point blank and wonders whether his father was really cool and tolerant as he has all along been asserting. The father accuses his son of being in a temper and wants him to be patient like himself. On the point of marriage however, he

is adamant that the son must accept the wife of his father's choice even she happens to be the ugliest among women. If his son does not obey him unconditionally, he will disinherit and even disown him. "Damn me if ever I call you Jack again," says he and fretting and fuming goes away.

Capt. Absolute is perturbed with the predicament he suddenly finds himself in, but is firm on his resolution not to marry against his choice. He thinks his father has been very unreasonable all along, for he himself had married the girl he had long loved and had lived a gay youthful life. In the meanwhile Fag enters and informs his master that Sir Anthony has been very furious and even violent, for he kicked whatever he got in his way. Absolute is in no mood to tolerate his servant's impertinence at the moment ; so he pushes him away and goes out. Being subject to his masters temper Fag in turn gets unnecessarily angry with the errand boy and shouting and kicking follows his master.

Critical hints : This scene brings before us the hero of the play, Capt. Absolute, for the first time. Although we had known much about him earlier also, his complete personality is revealed in this scene only. Similarly, Bob Acres who provides a lot of fun in the play, makes his first appearance here and contributes not a little in complicating and bringing the crisis in the play.

The scene is, however, more important from the point of view of bringing the affairs of the heroes of the main and sub-plot to an initial crisis. In case of Capt. Absolute's affair it is brought about by his father's order to his son to marry the rich heiress he has selected for him and the son's refusal to obey the father. The domineering Sir Anthony demands complete obedience from his son or else, he threatens him that he will certainly have nothing to do with him as a father. The threats and the frenzy of the father fail to make the son yield and the faithful lover in him remains firm. The father leaves him in anger threatening to disown him. This is certainly a predicament for Capt. Absolute who finds that dark clouds are certainly hovering on the horizon for him. Another circumstance that hints at the impending trouble is Bob Acres' rivalry with Beverley. Acres has threatened to fight Beverley

and although Capt. Absolute is not afraid of him, he is apprehensive of the premature discovery of his affair due to Acres' foolishness.

Similarly there is also a hint of the crisis in the affair of Faulkland and Julia. We have already known about Faulkland's doubting nature, but we see it in full action only now. It is natural to conclude that all will not go well with him and Julia, since he is not happy with the reports about her that he gets from Acres.

The scene is interesting from the point of view of the display of real Sir Anthony in it. His absurd commands and threats, ironical self-praise and violent anger provide a great occasion for fun and amusement. Faulkland's sentimental idealism, Acres' original oaths and Fag's hypocrisy also contribute their share in making the scene consistently entertaining. The scene is one of those few that verge almost on farcical. Brilliant dialogues and scintillating wit are the merits of the scene as much as they are of the play.

Act II—Scene II.

Lucy is walking on the North Parade, to contact Sir Lucius and pass over to him the letter sent by his Delia (Mrs. Malaprop). She mutters that since Sir Lucius takes 'Delia' to be Lydia according to her own duping of him, there will now be three rivals for the hand of Lydia—Beverley, Acres, and Sir Lucius. Although Acres has now been dismissed as a suitor by Mrs. Malaprop she has been kind enough to inform him that Beverley is the cause of it. She is surprised to find that Sir Lucius is late in being there to get his letter. It is certainly regrettable that he had to be deceived but how will it be useful to tell him that his Delia is an old lady of fifty! In the meanwhile Sir Lucius arrives on the North Parade and explains his being late by informing Lucy that he has been waiting for her on the South Parade. He now gets his letter from Lucy and starts reading it. It is full of usual blunders of Mrs. Malaprop to which Sir Lucius makes an ironical hint in his remarks about the faithfulness of her love. He expresses his own sincerity of love for her and amusingly calls his Delia, the 'queen of dictionary'. When Lucy tells him that she is very fond of him, Sir Lucius assures her that he will make the most affectionate husband to her. But he will rather marry her with

her aunt's consent and not risk losing her fortune by eloping with her. Although Sir Lucius is poor he does not fail to bribe Lucy by giving hersome money and a few kisses in the bargain. Lucy, like a coquette, objects to his impudence and threatens him that his Delia will be angry if she learns of it. Sir Lucius is quite an adept in the psychology of love and women and he asks Lucy to tell her mistress that Sir Lucius kissed her fifty times, for he is sure modesty may be praised by women but they do not like it. Now Fag suddenly arrives there and Sir Lucius has to leave. Fag mischievously tells Lucy that he has seen her being kissed by Sir Lucius and accuses her of probable treachery, for he has also seen her handing over to that gentleman, a letter which in all probability should have been intended for his master. If this is known to his master he will challenge Sir Lucius in a duel or else he himself will Lncy has no alternative but to tell the truth to Fag that Mrs. Malaprop waskeeping secret correspondence with the Irishman under a false name. She goes on to add that Beverley will now have to face another serious rival Captain Absolute, the son of rich Sir Anthony. No sooner does Fag hear this, than he hastens to beg leave of Lucy so as to convey the happy news to his master. Lucy thinks that perhaps Fag is nervous to hear the news of a new rival and so asks him to tell his master to keep heart. Fag, however, does not care to stay to hear her speak and leaves at once.

Critical Hints :—The scene resolves a crisis and creates another. The plot moves further in the scene and the hero seems to be nearing his goal.

Captain Absolute's trouble with Bob Acres is further strengthened, since he is informed that he has been dismissed as a suitor in favour of Beverley. Thus the bragging simpleton Acres can well be expected to do something to oppose Beverley.

Then there is the news of Sir Anthony's choice for his son being Lydia herself. The news apparently brings a rival to Beverley, but Captain Absolute is happy beyond measure to receive the news. The crisis in his relations with his father can now be easily resolved. The other rivals to Captain Absolute are Acres and Sir Lucius. Acres is a coward of the first water and so Captain Absolute cares little for him. About Sir Lucius, Fag informs his master that he has been carrying

on correspondence actually with Mrs. Malaprop who is impersonating Delia. So he need not worry about him at all. Thus apparently the whole crisis should be over.

The new trouble that is hinted in the scene is, that once Captain Absolute is reconciled to his father, he will be presented to court Lydia in his own person and be recognised. What will then be Lydia's reaction, sentimental and absurdly romantic as she is known to be. Will it not be risking his success, since Lydia might refuse to accept the rich heir Capt. Absolute. There is a lot of suspense in guessing how things will go after the discovery about Captain Absolute—and the discovery is bound to come soon. Thus the action of the play is moving towards further complication and crisis in this scene.

Act III—Scene I

Summary : Captain Absolute has been already informed by his servant Fag that girl his father wanted him to marry was the very girl he was courting. As he is walking on the North Parade, he is now making his future plan in a manner that the crisis in his affair may be resolved. He decides to go to his father and present himself as the penitent son ready to obey his father's commands unconditionally. He does not yet want to tell his father that Lydia is the girl of his choice also. He executes his decision at once, since he finds his father coming that way. Sir Anthony is naturally looking very sullen and passionate and is muttering that he will neither ever forgive his son, nor will die early to make his path smooth. He is very shocked to see that in return for his kindness to his eldest son, in making him an extra allowance he has been rewarded with only his disobedience. So he will never see him again. Now the son comes before the father with a very sorry and penitent face and admits that he has been wrong in disobeying his father. The father in anger asks him to get out of his way. But the son continues to express his decision to act according to his father's will. He has come to this decision after a long deliberation on his father's past goodness and kindness to him, and his own duty towards his father. He is now completely resolved to sacrifice his inclinations to his father's satisfaction. Sir Anthony is now very pleased and immediately informs his son that lady he wants him to marry is Lydia Languish, the niece the of Mrs.

Malaprop, whom he has already met in their country. The son seems neither to remember them nor to think that he has ever heard their names. With great difficulty he can recall that Miss Languish was perhaps the red-haired and the squint-eyed girl, he had once seen. The father denies all his son's memories and goes on to describe Lydia's beauty with enthusiasm and delight. He calls her the blooming love-breathing seventeen, with wild eyes, blushing cheeks, sweetly painted lips etc. The pretending son knows all about it and so shows no concern with the descriptions of her beauty. It comes as an anticlimax when the son asks the father whether he has to marry the niece or the aunt. Sir Anthony is furious at his son's unfeeling, insensible nature and recalls how he in his young age would have been maddened by such a description. He did run away with his young, beautiful wife for love, and would never have accepted an ugly woman. The son corners his father by asking if he would not have obeyed even his father in the matter. Sir Anthony in his enthusiasm is on the verge of saying that he would have disobeyed even his father, but then checks himself in time not to say as much. His son is, however, not concerned with anything in the matter but to obey his father even if the girl is as ugly as his father had earlier described her. Sir Anthony is disgusted at his son's coldness and calls him an anchorite, an insensible piece of wood and a dullard who does not fly like a rocket on hearing the description of the girl's beauty. He goes even so far as to say that if the son is so indifferent, he will himself marry the girl. Captain Absolute pretends that in that case he will agree to marry the aunt if his father so desires. Sir Anthony curses his son as a liar and a hypocrite and hopes that he has been lying about his enthusiasm for the girl. Then he asks the son to come with him and carry a letter of introduction to Mrs. Malaprop, the aunt, who will let him visit Lydia. He expects that the girl's beautiful eyes will excite love's passion and impatience in him. It the son does not get stark mad to marry the girl, the father will marry her himself.

Critical hints : The scene is one of the most interesting ones in the play. From the point of view of plot, it only brings about the solution of the earlier crisis in the hero's

affairs. It was already hinted in the earlier scene that such a reconciliation might come. But the accord between the father and the son will now compel the son to appear before Lydia in his own person and thus invite another crisis.

The merit of the scene, in particular, is in its fun, humour and brilliant dialogues. Sir Anthony's enthusiastic desciptions of Lydia's beauty make him look like a farcical character. His satisfied instinct of parental authority dupes him to his son's clever pretentions and renders him extremely laughable. The rognish and mischievous references of the son to the girls' ugliness, his cornering of his father, and his abject surrendering to his father's will to the tune of agreeing to marry even the aunt are all very amusing and interesting.

Act III—Scene II.

Faulkland sits alone in Julia's dressing room waiting for her. As ever, he is cursing and accusing himself of his jealous and doubting disposition which has tortured his Julia so much in the past. Just before when he met her in Sir Anthony's presence she was really overjoyed to see him, but he in his foolishness showed indifference to her, for her being happy in his absence. Julia now comes in and expresses concern over his coldness to her in their meeting just before. Faulkland replies that he is really very happy to see her healthy and gay, but as he had learnt from Bob Acres, perhaps she has been too gay and even danced and sang. This he thinks was so unjust on her part, because the lovers when separated should rather be melancholy than happy ; tears of separated lovers are a sort of solemn vow for him. So his concern now was only to hear that Julia was not really too happy and was constantly thinking of Faulkland while away from him. Julia in her innocence reaffirms her faithfulness to her lover and thinks that he has been rather cruel in his doubting and freakish nature towards her. Her happiness behind Faulkland was a sort of assurance of his sincerity to her, otherwise people would have interpreted her melancholy as her dissatisfaction with her lover. Her smiles were only a mask for her inner sorrows. How can she be unfaithful to him, when she remembers all the time her gratitude to him for having saved her life ? This last idea of loving a person for gratitude goes against Faulkland's senti-

mental idealism in love. He protests against the idea and feels that he should be loved only for the sake of love and not for anything else like name, money, or handsomeness. He even wishes to become ugly to test her love for him. Julia retorts by saying that she has certainly seen many handsomer people than Faulkland and yet has continued to love him sincerely. This cordial avowal of love instead of pleasing, irritates the suspicious fool who thinks that had she really loved him enough, she should have regarded him the most handsome man. Julia in good faith recalls that she has been bound to him by the will of her father to marry him and that is a great privilege for Faulkland : but the doubting lover twists this statement also to affirm that she ought to love him with her own free-will rather than submit to any such compulsion. When Julia asks him to set her free so that her faithfulness be proved Faulkland takes this to mean that Julia wishes to be free because she has a mind to get rid of him. Julia is now feeling aggrieved to the extreme but Faulkland's tyranny goes on. He lectures her on her faults and his own virtues. He thinks that his doubts arise from his excessive love for her : that women often love for things other than spontaneous love itself, such as gratitude, wealth or beauty. He has all these and wants to be sure that he is loved for none of these except real love. Now things seem to be going rather too far to be bearable for Julia. She can check herself no more, starts weeping bitterly and then goes out of the room. Faulkland now gets conscious of what he has done and tries to call her back with no results. Her tears have shocked him to be conscious of his brutality. He starts blaming himself but soon imagines that Julia is coming back. The thought brings to his mind the idea that women are so inconstant that they cannot steadily be angry for some time. Julia does not return. Whatever turn the things take place it is always Julia to be blamed and so Faulkland now blames her of obstinacy. Then again he blamed himself for torturing and doubting her loving soul even when he had met her after so long. He resolves not to trouble her any more once her anger has been appeased.

Critical hints : The scene is not much important from the point of view of action in the play. The main plot will not suffer at all even if the scene is entirely taken out. The

episode described here presents an independent crisis in the subplot, the Julia-Faulkland affair. In characterization also the scene informs us little new about Julia and Faulkland. It only shows their qualities, hinted earlier, into elaborate action. It is valuable in putting the main characters Captain Absolute and Lydia into relief by contrasting with them the characters of Faulkland and Julia. Whereas Lydia has so far been shown absurdly romantic and sentimental, Julia has a realistic commonsense and is sober. While Julia bows to the will of her father, Lydia will never marry with her aunt's consent. Similarly, Captain Absolute's cleverness and commonsense in love contrasts with Faulkland's foolishness and sentimentality.

This is one of the scenes that have been considered a blemish on the play. It is not in tune with the spirit of this comedy. Although Sheridan opposed sentimental comedy in very strong terms, he fails here to keep himself immune from its influence. The pious idealism of Faulkland and the innocent tears of Julia must have found favour with middle class moralists of the age and might have contributed a to in the popularity of the play. The forced pathos and sentimental effusions of the scene are today considered one of its main weaknesses. If only they are ironically taken, they can be called useful in any manner.

Act III—Scene III

Captain Absolute with a letter of introduction from his father, has come to visit Mrs. Malaprop. She welcomes him and is pleased with his ingenuousness. Absolute in return flatters Mrs. Malaprop by calling her a lady of intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and learning. She is obviously tickled and complains that there are few people these days who value learning in women rather than beauty. Absolute knows the art of pleasing women by pretending to agree with them; and he does so adding that Mrs. Malaprop is one of those few that have beauty and knowledge both. Praising Absolute's politeness the old aunt complains that her niece has foolishly come to love a worthless ensign whom she has never seen. She has been confined since the affair was discovered and the name of Sir Anthony's son has also been proposed to her as a suitor but she has refused him. The aunt then discloses

that she has intercepted a letter that very day from her lover to her and produces it. The Captain at once understands that Lucy must have betrayed him. Very cleverly and with good humour he takes up the letter and reads it, commenting upon the writer's character now and then. The ensign has written in the letter that Lydia is his soul's idol. He is afraid that a new rival has been brought against him. He refers to Mrs. Malaprop as a weather-beaten she-dragon and hopes that he will be able to dupe her and even make her a go-between in their meeting. He ridicules her vanity in dressing up her coarse features and using words that she does not understand. Mrs. Malaprop feels offended at this and laughs at the fellow's impudence, remarking that she will certainly plot better to defeat his plans. Absolute ingeniously persuades the old lady to agree to his secret meeting with Lydia. He wants her to let Beverley go ahead with Lydia in planning elopement and then at the eleventh hour, he will, with Mrs. Malaprop's consent, interfere and carry Lydia away himself, much to the discomfiture of Beverley. Absolute asks Mrs. Malaprop to tell Lydia that her Beverley has come to see her so that she may not refuse seeing Captain Absolute. She agrees since it will be a good joke. She then calls out Lydia to come down. The Captain is almost in a mood to throw off his disguise and elope with Lydia at once but he thinks that if he undeceives her now she might react unfavourably to it and be lost to him.

Lydia now comes muttering and complaining. She at once decides to appeal to her suitors generosity for leaving her free to pursue her love and therefore addresses Captain Absolute directly. As she looks at his face she finds her own Beverley and feels astonished at his getting there with his aunt's consent. Her lover explains that since he had come to know that Captain Absolute was to visit her, he managed to keep him away and to impersonate him. Lydia is happy at his duping her aunt and this adventurous meeting. She proposes to effect immediately their plan of elopement if he will not care losing her fortune. Absolute promptly affirms that her beauty and love are the only dowry he wants and he can repay. Lydia is naturally glad at the prospect of enjoying the charm of poverty with her lover and Absolute acquiesces in the thought and embraces her. Now Mrs. Malaprop comes

eaves-dropping to see Lydia's reaction to Captain Absolute. She hears Absolute complaining of Lydia's passiveness and thinks she is angry with him. Lydia's reply that she will ever be of her Beverley also lets Mrs. Malaprop to be sure of her earlier estimate of the situation. When she finds Absolute kneeling before her, she can no more contain her anger. she comes hard upon her niece and apologises to Absolute for her rule behaviour. Lydia replies that she never told the gentleman that she loved anyone else but Beverley. Absolute says that he does not mind anything at all and will try again in future. The scene ends with Lydia affirming her faith to her lover and Mrs. Malaprop threatening to choke her words in her throat.

Critical hints : The scene brings near the crisis that is soon to come in the relations between Lydia and Captain Absolute. The fact that his own beloved is also the girl of his father's choice has not helped him much in winning over Lydia for there is still the danger of the discovery of his identity and Lydia's uncertain reaction to it. He has for once, deceived Mrs. Malaprop and claimed Lydia's avowal of faithfulness but that has been done only as Beverley. It will need a lot of further ingenuity and good luck to get everything end happily.

This also is one of the most amusing and interesting scenes in the play. Absolute's clever over-reaching of the old aunt and his satiric and ironic mockery of her are the things to be enjoyed. So also are Mrs. Malaprop's show of her vanity and cleverness ending in her stupid deception.

That the so-called learning of women in the age was nothing but an occasion of their vanity, and snobbery is also testified by the behaviour of Mrs. Malaprop. Although she is proud of her knowledge and polite manners she has not even enough sense to keep secret a letter, in which she has been mocked at. She affects learning and manners but is really stupid and indelicate.

Act III—Scene IV

Bob Acres has worn the most uptodate and foppish dress and stands before his servant David to extract admiration. He

thinks that his old country dress was the bane of him and this new dress has made a great difference in his personality for the better. David is overwhelmed by his master's fashionable attires and compliments him suggesting that he will soon be taken as a famous beau of Bath and the caricature prints of his will be sold in the market as 'Devon Macroni'. Acres is obviously pleased with his servant's praise. David goes on to remark that his master has now changed so much that even his mother will not recognise him. Elated further, Acres asks his servant to call his French dancing master so that he may further practise his recently learnt fashionable dances. Before going out, David pays another compliment to his master for his stylish hair dressing which has rendered him entirely a new man. Now Acres is alone and moves up and down on the floor practising the steps in dancing. He is not able to do it smoothly and mutters that these foreign dances do not suit his extremely English legs, although he can go well with his country dances. In the meanwhile Sir Lucius comes in and Acres eagerly explains to him his troubles. He came to Bath to pursue his love affair with Lydia, but he has lately been dismissed in favour of another suitor, Beverley. Sir Lucius has a panacea for all such troubles and suggests to Acres that he should take offence at Berverley's behaviour and challenge him in a duel. Acres does not want to fight but Sir Lucius' clever handling of him persuades him to believe that his honour is involved in the matter and he must take Beverley's behaviour as provocation and breach of friendship. Beverley has not been Acres' friend at all but for Sir Lucius it is all the same. Now Acres seems all afire with anger and courage and describes Sir Lucius' exciting language as the military music encouraging him to the fight. He is hypnotized into challenging his rival at once and starts writing a letter to this effect while Sir Lucius dictates the text. It is couched in the most polite language possible as the old Irishman would like to use in all circumstances. Beverley is asked, in the letter, to come to King's Mead Fields in the evening for the duel. Sir Lucius says that he himself might have carried the letter to Beverley but he has another engagement in arranging his own duel with a Captain in the army, who has offended him by criticising his country in the insulting terms that merit vindication. Acres, much like a coward, wishes that Sir Lucius should first

face and kill his adversary so that he might only get a lesson in the art of fighting. The Irishman agrees to do that and leaves his friend with the instructions to pursue this affair most politely and agreeably though at the same time upkeeping his courage.

Critical hints: This scene further lessens the possibility of Captain Absolute easily gaining Lydia. The complication is brought about by Acres, deciding to challenge Beverley and Sir Lucius who had taken deliberate offence at Captain Absolute indicating that he will challenge him in a duel. He has not clearly told Acres that the girl he is trying to gain is his own choice also. Acres does not understand that Sir Lucius is trying to get rid of Beverley and Acres by instigating him to fight him and then he himself will undo Captain Absolute, making his path smooth to win Lydia. Thus there is a two-fold danger to Captain Absolute as hinted in the scene.

Acres' character is further explained in the scene. His aping of town fashions and manners and his empty boasts not only reveal Acres but also provide a happy occasion for enjoyment and satiric laughter. His stupidity in not being able to see through the blood-thirsty and ingenious Sir Lucius, shows what a country simpleton he is. Similarly Sir Lucius' characteristics, his affectation of polite manners, humour for fighting and cleverness in overreaching others have been made clear by the scene.

The scene also provides an occasion for some boisterous laughter and mild satire. Both Acres and Sir Lucius are the target of Sheridan, who seems to be as much delighted in ridiculing them as the audience must have been in finding them behaving in that manner.

Act IV—Scene I.

Summary: Bob Acres' servant David has got the information that his master is going to fight a duel with somebody. He is very unhappy at the news since he has little faith in his master's courage and fighting ability; he is almost sure that Acres will get killed or at least seriously wounded. He, therefore, earnestly requests his master not to go ahead with his plan of duel. David also has come to know that Sir Lucius persuaded his master to send the challenge, so he is furious at Sir

Lucius, whom he calls a blood-thirsty man and will care a straw for him. To this simple country servant fighting, at the most means, fighting with ordinary sticks, or cudgels ; swords and pistols are the weapons inconceivable to him. Acres cannot possibly agree with his servant for his honour is at stake. David again produces some incontrovertible commonsense logic that for honour's sake one should not endanger one's life, for if one is killed, who will enjoy that honour but the enemy ? It is not at all wise to be lowered into the grave even with too much of honour. Acres, however, again echoes the lesson taught by the pugnatious Irishman, that he cannot endanger the honour of his ancestors by withdrawing like a coward. David has his ready answer that he is not in a hurry to join his ancestors with a bullet in his head. Acres, at this, calls his servant a coward and pretends not to heed him. But he enquires whether there is really a great danger if one fights a duel. This shows that Acres is already afraid. He gets more so with David's reply that he is sure his master will get killed in the fight. Acres is obviously angry at his servant and vows that he will certainly fight. He takes out the letter of challenge but David will not even touch it for he thinks the thing is as dangerous as gunpowder. He fancies how will people weep at Acres' country home on getting the news of his death ; even his animals will feel for him. This is unbearable to Acres who scolds his servant and dismisses him as an ominous raven foreboding evil. Captain Absolute now comes in, since he has been called to carry the letter of challenge to Beverley whom he is supposed to know. Absolute is amused at the thought and gladly accepts to do the little service to his friend. to Acres also asks Absolute to act as his second in the duel but the latter naturally declines this. Since he is Beverley himself, how can he do that ? In that case, says Acres, he will ask Sir Lucius to do him this favour. The news now comes that Absolute is wanted by his father. Before he leaves, Acres asks him to try to frighten his enemy by giving him a description of Acres' courage and strength. He thinks that in such a case his enemy might not think of fighting him at all. Acres wants to be described as a person who kills a man every week in a duel. Absolute is amused at Acres' swaggering and ironically suggests that he will certainly report him as the "Fighting

Bob" and that this time he has been in the most devouring rage.

Critical hints : This is again a farcical scene, made so by Acres' swaggering about his courage and sense of honour, whereas he is really a coward, who will fain avoid a duel rather than insist on fighting it. David's simple attempts to imagine the pathetic scene of Acres' death, and Captain Absolute's ironical and sarcastic insinuations about Acres, and not a little to the humour of the scene.

The use of servants has been so cleverly made by Sheridan throughout, that it seems that they are not only indispensable to the action of the play but also to its interest and humour. David plays such a nice role in this scene that he becomes quite a lovable character with his genuine concern for the well-being of his master, his innocent mockery of him, his intelligent arguing about the nature and worthlessness of a duel, his sterling commonsense about the question of one's honour. His rustic wit and humour, his views and opinions and the cleverly witty language in which he puts them are such that would have done credit to anyone of the higher characters in the play.

Act IV—Scene II

Mrs. Malaprop is scolding Lydia for objecting to accept Capt. Absolute, who is such a fine gentleman. Lydia enjoys her aunt's mistake, for she thinks her aunt is actually praising Beverley. The aunt goes on to praise Capt. Absolute's breeding, language and phraseology and compares him to Hamlet's father by giving a quotation from Shakespeare, in which she makes many blunders. Lydia is wrongly happy that her aunt will soon face discomfiture when she discovers her mistake. Now Sir Anthony and Capt. Absolute come to call upon Mrs. Malaprop and are admitted at once. Before they enter, Mrs. Malaprop asks Lydia to behave properly before the guests, but the niece refuses to have anything to do with new suitor. Sir Anthony enters telling Mrs. Malaprop that he had a great difficulty in bringing his son there. He hopes Lydia has now realised the worth of his son and the honour she will gain by getting related to himself, baronet. He then asks his son to address Lydia. The son is naturally nervous and tries to

avoid addressing her in everybody's presence. He therefore asks his father to leave them alone. Meanwhile Mrs. Malaprop has been coaxing her niece to talk to the gentleman, while Lydia has been wondering why her aunt is not discovering her blunder in having mistaken Beverley for Capt. Absolute. Now with Sir Anthony, his real son must have come. Both the guardians continue to ask their wards to speak but they keep silent. The Captain gives the pretext that he is confused and does not know what to say but the father angrily replies that since he has not lost his voice he should speak anything whatsoever. Again now Capt. Absolute makes signs to Mrs. Malaprop to leave them alone and she asks Sir Anthony to do so. He refuses. Now finding that it is unavoidable, Capt. Absolute speaks slowly into the ear of Lydia, in a disguised and low hoarse voice. Sir Anthony shouts at his son to speak clearly and requests Mrs. Malaprop to ask Lydia to favour them with something more than a side front. Hopelessly compelled, Capt. Absolute now addresses Lydia directly. She at once recognises his voice and turns round to look him into his face and addresses him in surprise as her Beverley. It is now Sir Anthony and Mrs. Malaprop's turn to be confounded. They do not understand what all this means. The truth is soon discovered that the Captain has been playing tricks upon them. He frankly admits his deceiving everybody and gets everybody's angry protests in return. Sir Anthony is half glad that his son is not a dull fool after all and has a sense of romantic adventure like him, Lydia is frustrated that her dreams of elopement have come to a nought. Mrs. Malaprop is shocked to discover that it is Capt. Absolute himself who wrote those insulting letters calling her a she-dragon etc. Absolute requests his father to come to his rescue and his father requests Mrs. Malaprop on his son's behalf to forgive him. She agrees and then the old father and the aunt decide to leave the young lovers to themselves. Sir Anthony is so excited that he hums a romantic tune and catches hold of Mrs. Malaprop's band before going out.

Capt. Absolute now faces a difficult situation. He 'tries' to address Lydia persuasively but she replies with a sullen, Sir! Her lover requests her to be happy now that they have been united with their friend's consent but Lydia exclaims that this was

exactly what she never wanted. The request of Absolute to forget the romance of poverty and rejoice in getting the chance of living in wealth and affluence also goes unheeded. Then the clever lover tries utter submission and kneels before her with the result that she makes an angry protest that there is no fun in kneeling when she is being compelled to have him. The Captain at once agrees to set her free if she so wishes thinking that he might bring her round by a little stiffness if all else fails. Lydia now starts complaining in anger about how she was deceived and humoured like a child and how all her romantic plans of elopement and deceiving her aunt have been foiled. She furiously throws away the small picture of her lover that she had kept so far as a keepsake and declares that she is dismissing Beverley from her heart, for good. Absolute now takes out a picture of Lydia from his pocket and praises its beauty and charm declaring that he will never part from it. He also indicates that if they separate, people will cast aspersions on her for being unfaithful and think that perhaps she has been abandoned by her lover. Lydia at this bursts into tears.

Now Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony enter the room and find Lydia weeping and accusing Captain Absolute of treachery and deceit. They are surprised that instead of affectionately smiling at each other in love, they are quarrelling. They ask them the reason but get no reply. They suspect there might have been some more disclosures of tricks from Captain Absolute. Lydia then vents her anger and goes out declaring she will never see Beverley again. Mrs. Malaprop, at this, expresses doubts whether the Captain has been quite respectful to her. Sir Anthony catches the hint and declares that his son must have been lively and impatient with the girl like all his ancestors in the past. The thought amuses the old man very greatly. Heartily laughing he pushes his son out with delightful protests while he requests Mrs. Malaprop to make his son's peace with the girl.

Critical hints : The scene presents the greatest crisis in the affairs of Captain Absolute. Apparently, it seemed that since the girl of his father's choice was Lydia herself, everything in future will go well. But it does not, since Lydia's caprice upsets everything. It has been a constant effort of

Capt. Absolute so far to postpone the discovery of his real self, but he can do it no more. Even when he has been brought to Lydia's presence by his father, he tries desperately to avoid speaking to her. At last he speaks and is known to be Sir Anthony's son and not Beverley. The old guardians leave them alone and then comes the real crisis. Lydia is furious and accuses her lover of treachery and deceit. She dismisses him as a lover and flings off his portrait. Capt. Absolute tries all the resources at his command to bring her round but to no avail. He is certainly in a pitiable condition now.

There now hangs over Capt. Absolute the danger of two duels which as we have already learnt, he will have to fight against Bob Acres (as Beverley) and Sir Lucius (as Capt. Absolute). The quadrangular contest between the rivals has now been resolved into three-cornered one, since Beverley has not turned out to be Capt. Absolute.

The element of suspense reaches its highest pitch in this scene. Since we are most interested in the fortunes of the hero and the heroine we find that they are at the moment on their lowest ebb. It seems an unresolvable crisis that has come to them. The spirit of the play has been happy so far, but we wonder how all this is going to be set right to bring a happy ending.

Then there is the humour of the scene brought about by the situation cleverly managed. It is really the ingenius manipulation of characters that brings them to a ludicrous state. Capt. Absolute has been brought perforce to face Lydia. Both the old guardians press their wards to speak to each other while they avoid it At last they face each other and then what with delightful pretending of anger by Sir Anthony, the sense of anticlimax and in Lydia's frustrated fancies and Mrs. Malaprop's discomfiture in recalling that this very brute called her a dragon. Serious pathos is out of tune with the spirit of comedy ; so even when a serious crisis has been shown in the affair of Capt. Absolute in being jilted by and estranged from his ladylove, the situations before and after the incident are so humorous that they redeem the pathos and forebode that things may yet resolve themselves favourably.

Act IV—Scene III

On the North Parade, Sir Lucius stands waiting to meet Capt. Absolute, so as to challenge him in a duel for offending him. The real cause of his picking up a quarrel with Absolute is that he is the real impediment in his winning over Lydia, and so he must be got rid of. Sir Lucius wonders what is there in these army officers so attractive that they can easily entice all the young girls. Now he sees Capt. Absolute coming that way and muttering something to himself; so he steps aside to see what he is speaking about. Absolute comes grumbing that all his plotting and manoeuvring to win Lydia have failed so miserably that he is now in the worst humour of his life. He is so desperate that he will not mind killing himself or some one else. Sir Lucius is glad to find his enemy in such a downcast mood and steps forward to quarrel with him 'genteely'. He begins abruptly by remarking to the Captain that he begs to differ from him in opinion. Capt. Absolute has given no opinion at all but that is all the same to the pugnacious old man who opines that one may think untruth as well as express it. Absolute retorts that unless a man has expressed his thought, how can they be called his opinions ? This gives Sir Lucius a clever chance of remarking that in this very matter they differ. That is enough for a quarrel ; yet Sir Lucius also adds that he was offended by the Capt. last week. They must therefore fight a duel. Since Absolute is in a mood to kill or get killed he readily accepts. They then decide to meet at King's Mead Fields at six in the evening and since the light will be dim then, to fight with small swords.

Sir Lucius now makes an exit and Faulkland chances to meet his friend the Captain. Absolute discloses the tale of his misery in being jilted by Lydla, to Faulkland, who wonders that instead of being pleased Lydia should be angry at the turn of events. Capt. Absolute further informs his friend that he has been challenged in a duel by one Sir Lucius, and asks Faulkland to act his second. Faulkland in return informs his friend that he is worried over his own quarrel with Julia and curses himself as the cruel fellow responsible for the trouble. Meanwhile a servant brings to Faulkland a letter from Julia in which she has requested him to see her at once, since she is no more angry with him. Faulkland is still as morose as ever and

Absolute upbraids him for it. Faulkland with his ever suspicious nature remarks that the offer of reconciliation should have come from him first and in making it Julia has been a little indelicate and forward Capt. Absolute gets impatient at hearing this and scolds Faulkland as incorrigible. He compares his own hard lot with his and remarks that if he had been worried over his failure with Lydia, it would have been quite plausible but sadness and complaint when everything is so well with him, mean nothing but absurdity. He then leaves in anger and Faulkland stays to reproach himself for his folly. Yet he is sure there must be some nicety in love which Julia chose to give up. The idea of being Absolute's second in the duel suggests to him a plan to test Julia's love further. It will be to give her a concocted story that he has killed some one in a duel. Then he will see how she reacts. If she fails in the test he will let her alone for some fool to get.

Critical hints : The scene furthers the action of the play in bringing it to another deepened crisis. The characters and their affairs have been so cleverly manipulated that everything is set for a climax and a consequent resolution. The hints can well be seen in this scene. Capt. Absolute has already been very miserable and now Sir Lucius' challenge brings a further piquancy to it. It now seems sure that he will have to fight Sir Lucius.

This scene also has a bearing upon the Julia-Faulkland episode. On the one hand it proposes to bring Faulkland also at the place of the duel as Absolute's second and get associated with duellists, on the other it puts in Faulkland's head an idea of giving a test to Julia's love with a false story ; that will bring further crisis in their affair with a temporary estrangement.

Thus the scene presents before us the stage of the worst complication and estrangements in the play. There is hardly any ray of hope promising final happiness. Both in the fortunes of the hero of the main plot and that of the subplot we find a crisis that threatens to undo them any moment. Even if Capt. Absolute wins his duel against Sir Lucius and Bob Acres, what is the surety that Lydia will give up her romantic whim and accept him ? All his sincerity in love, intelligence

and ingenuity have been of no avail. Thus the circumstances of the scene clearly indicate that her Sheridan has presented the worst crisis in the affair of the hero and the *climax* of the play. The climax of the subplot, however, reaches only in the next scene, in which the seeds of resolution in the main plot seem to get sown.

Act V—Scene I

Julia is waiting in her dressing-room for Faulkland, who has sent her a message that he has been involved in a dreadful accident and wants to see her alone. As Faulkland arrives, Julia asks him what has happened. He gives her a concocted story that he has quarrelled with a person and killed him ; so he wants immediately to fly away from his country in order to escape the rigours of law. He wishes he had married Julia earlier, then he would not have minded his banishment so much. Julia is naturally very alarmed but loses no time in deciding her course of action. She proposes to go with Faulkland wherever he will, marry him later at a safe place and share in his sorrows and miseries as his lawful wife. She will also soothe and comfort him in his sorrows as a wife should, Faulkland expresses thankfulness for Julia's sacrifice but asks her to think twice before taking any such step, for then life will only be of pains and sorrows and Faulkland will have nothing to offer to her except his love. Julia reaffirms her faith in her lover and says that she will do all the service she can for the sake of love, and they must now hurry away. Faulkland suggests that it will not be possible to leave before it gets dark. Julia is all love and sacrifice in further assuring her lover that they will live happily with her small fortune, even in poverty, when away from their home. The foolish Faulkland has not done yet ; he again expresses apprehensions about his unstable nature which might grow worse in the troubled life of an exile and may be an incessant source of torture for her. Julia promises to bear happily even that, taking into consideration the misfortune upon him. Now there is nothing more to be tested and Faulkland gives out that all that he has told her was a mere fiction, given only to test her sincerity in love. He begs Julia's forgiveness for his suspicious nature and affirms that this will be his last fault. If only she will agree, he is prepared to marry her the very next day. Julia has, however, got the

shock of her life and becomes angry to the extreme. She expresses happiness at the thought that he has killed no one but cannot tolerate the mean test to which she has been put, nor will she heed any excuses. She gave him all she had and loved him even before her father expressed such a desire. She has been tested long enough and she will not like to marry him in order to be tortured all her life with his incorrigibly suspicious nature. Yet in sincerity she promises that she will never marry any other person and will always have good wishes for Faulkland, praying to God to cure him of his infirmity. If ever he is sorry for his conduct let him feel that he himself brought all the misery upon him. Julia then leaves Faulkland behind and rushes angrily out of the room. Faulkland now sits repenting and is afraid that he has perhaps lost her for ever. He blames himself as usual for being cruel to such a gentle and good-natured girl and for driving her away from his company. He is in a hurry to leave for the King's Mead Fields to act as Absolute's second in the duel and wishes that he had to fight the duel himself and get killed. He leaves the place at once.

Lydia now comes to pay Julia a visit. She has been having all along the memories of her lover, Beverley. She hopes that a lecture from her sober cousin Julia might make her recall him. As she sees Julia sad and downcast, she guesses that Faulkland must have been the cause of her misery. Julia is too sensible to admit any secrets of her or to accuse her lover, before anyone else, may she be her own cousin. Julia informs Lydia that she has all along known from Faulkland the secret that Capt. Absolute was Beverley. She did not criticize her choice only because she knew this, otherwise she would have. Lydia strongly protests that everybody has been deceiving her and now she will have to undergo the torture of an arranged marriage. None of the nice ropes and a carriage and an elopement in the night and subsequent paragraphs in the newspapers, will she enjoy. In place of all these thrills will come the anti-climax of marrying with a Bishop's licence. Julia does not agree with her friend and sincerely advises her not to be sentimental in giving up such a faithful lover as Capt. Absolute.

Mrs. Malaprop now suddenly bursts in along with Fag

and David, shouting murder and man-slaughter. The two girls cannot make out what all this means and enquires about it in turn from Mrs. Malaprop and Fag and David. After Mrs. Malaprop has blundered a little and Fag has fumbled with a clear statement in his long windedness they learn that Capt. Absolute is involved in a duel. David tells that his master Acres is also there along with Sir Lucius and Faulkland. Lydia is very frightened to hear Capt. Absolute in danger. Julia asks them all to move to the scene of mischief at once so as to be able to prevent it in time. Mrs. Malaprop is very apprehensive since Sir Lucius is also involved in the danger and wants them all to rush out at once. They all leave for the scene of duel led by Fag while David is sent to look for Sir Anthony and get him there.

Critical Hints : This scene presents to us the fourth stage in the development of plot, namely, the resolution. The things had already reached their peak point in the climax in the earlier scene and now they directly move towards a resolution foreboding a happy ending. Although what happens with Julia, and Faulkland only seems the most serious crisis in their affair it also has a bearing upon the main plot. Lydia, who has come to visit her sober cousin Julia is already shown half ready to receive her jilted lover whose memories have been constantly echoing in her mind. She also suspects that a lecture from Julia will make her recall him. This is certainly a hint for the coming events. The lecture from Julia also soon comes. Although Lydia is still sorry that her dreams for an elopement and all other romantic thrills have not materialised, she is half prepared to forget all about them and accept Capt. Absolute as soon as an opportunity presents itself. When Fag and David inform her that the Captain is involved in the serious danger of a duel, she feels mortally afraid and rushes along with others to the scene of the duel. All this is enough to point out the resolution in the plot that is rapidly progressing into denouement.

The Julia-Faulkland episode has unnecessarily been prolonged in this scene and is responsible for further boredom in the play. The sentimental effusions of Faulkand and Julia were already presented to the audience in enough measure and this scene does not inform us anything new about them,

except that Julia has at last decided to sever her relations with Faulkland. A lady with a little more of self-respect would have done so even earlier.

This scene also presents to us a good example of how Sheridan has made a clever use of servants in the play. They have played an important part in it, acting as the confidants and advisers of their masters. They have shown their worth by keeping constant watch over their masters and preventing in time, what might have been a bloody end indeed. The long-winded Fag and foolishly proud David also provide a lot of humour in the scene, while Mrs. Malaprop is as much blundering and foolishly vain here as ever.

Act V—Scene II

Summary. Capt. Absolute is walking on the North Parade, waiting for Faulkland to accompany him to the scene of the duel. He has a sword which he has concealed under his greatcoat. He suddenly finds his father coming towards him, muffles up his face and tries to avoid him. Sir Anthony is only half sure that he can recognise his son in this gentleman, who now pretends to be one Saunderson on being addressed. As Sir Anthony scrutinises his face cautiously he gets sure it is Jack Absolute his son and at once tells him so. Capt. Absolute now admits the truth and tells his father that he did all this for only a joke, while he was only looking for him. The father is not convinced and asks him that if he wanted to meet him why did he muffle up his face ? The son now invents another lie and says that he was going to Lydia to bring her round. He is afraid that his father might propose to come with him, so he hints that the weather is very cold and it will be bad for his gout to move outside in the cool air. Sir Anthony now suddenly touches his son at his breast and feels something hard there. The son gives yet another lie by explaining that he was carrying some little ornaments as a present to his ladylove. The father insists upon seeing the ornaments, flings open his coat and the sword falls down. Once again the son tries to hoodwink his father, telling him that he was carrying the sword to frighten Lydia. If she did not agree to accept him, he will threaten to commit suicide before her. Sir Anthony is only half convinced and remarks that the plan will hardly succeed with

Lydia who will rather like him to go ahead with the suicide plan. Capt. Absolute now walks away in a hurry so as to avoid his father and in the meantime David comes running, shouting to Sir Anthony to call his son back and prevent murder and bloodshed. Sir Anthony is only stupefied. As David comes near he explains how duels were going to be fought soon and that his son was proceeding towards the very place. Sir Anthony now sees through his son's excuses at once and proceeds along with David towards King's Mead Fields. David wants to take some constables with them but Sir Anthony pushes him along while taking his shoulder to support himself and discussing his son's impudence.

Critical Hints : The scene furthers a little more the plan of resolution started in the earlier scene. Sheridan is cleverly trying to assemble all the characters at one place for final reconciliation. Capt. Absolute, Bob Acres, and Sir Lucius are to reach King's Mead Fields for their duels and Faulkland to act as a second to Absolute. Mrs. Malaprop, Lydia and Julia are reaching there led by Fag, to prevent mischief. Now Sir Anthony and David also run towards the place for checking in time any bloodshed.

The scene also provides a short episode between the witty father and son. They indulge in a display of intelligence and once again the father is over-reached by son.

Act V—Scene III

Summary : Acres and Sir Lucius have reached the place of the duel before anyone else and are preparing for the preliminaries. Acres indicates that he will like to shoot at his adversary from a distance of forty yards, thinking that thus he will avoid his rival's shot better. Sir Lucius thinks that this is a very long distance since it is not going to be a duel with guns but with pistols. He measures three or four steps for the purpose much to the alarm of Acres who refuses to accept Sir Lucius' proposal. Sir Lucius being the experienced man in the art, asks Acres not to care about the distance which he will settle with Beverley's second. He enquires about his duties in case Acres gets killed ; has he any will to be executed in such an eventuality. This frightens Acres who is further confused by Sir Lucius' question as to

how will he present himself to his enemy's shots. Acres chooses the side front thinking that thus he will lessen the chances of being shot. Lucius counters his proposal by suggesting that in such a case there will be every possibility of his being hit in some vital part. He thinks that front pose will be safer and genteel. Acres does not agree. In the meanwhile two persons are reported by Sir Lucius to be advancing towards them and the information frightens Acres quite potently. He frankly admits he is in half a mood to run away and that his courage is failing him. Sir Lucius reminds him of his honour and asks him to be brave. Capt. Absolute and Faulkland now arrive on the scene and Sir Lucius, thinking that Faulkland is Beverley asks him to get ready to fight Acres. Faulkland expresses suprise at the proposal and is then introduced to Sir Lucius. Acres refuses to fight his friend, although Sir Lucius insists that even if Beverley has not turned up, Faulkland may deputise for him. Capt. Absolute now discloses that he is the real Beverley and offers to fight. Acres who in turn gets adamant that he will never fight his dearest friend Absolute, come what may. All Sir Lucius' insults and insinuations fail to affect Acres, who has got a golden opportunity to escape fatal consequences and he avails himself of it. He offers to act as Sir Lucius' second and will also execute his commission in case he gets killed. Sir Lucius, then dismisses Acres as a coward beneath his notice and himself gets ready to fight Capt. Absolute. As they both draw their swords Sir Anthony and party arrive on the scene and ask them to hold up.

Sir Anthony directly asks them to explain the cause of their fight. Sir Lucius refers to the insult he got at the hands of Capt. Absolute. He is sure that Lydia is ready to accept him and says so. Lydia then frankly and unhesitatingly admits her love for Capt. Absolute and sets all doubts at rest. Capt. Absolute expresses his sorrow at the unintended offence to Sir Lucius and begs his pardon, although for Lydia, he is still ready to fight. Bob Acres frankly declares that he makes no claim on her and will like to go without a wife if it is going to cost him his life. Sir Lucius also rises to the occasion and accepts Capt. Absolute's apology; yet he presents the letters written to him by Delia, and asks Lydia if she never

wrote them. Mrs. Malaprop, in her turn, makes the candid confession that she is the real Delia and foolishly hints that in case Sir Lucius likes to woo her, she might encourage him. Sir Lucius now sees through the whole thing and sarcastically proposes to offer Mrs. Malaprop to Acres and Capt. Absolute while refusing her himself. Everybody tries to enjoy a joke at the old lady's cost. Only Sir Anthony comes to her rescue telling her that she is in her bloom yet. The reconciled people now retire a little aside and Julia and Faulkland come together. They sense each other's feelings and find excuses for being immediately reconciled. Julia declares she has been unkind to her lover since there was after all some truth in his story. Faulkland also is sorry for his past conduct and begs pardon for it. They are soon loving souls again. Sir Anthony now interrupts them thinking that they are quarrelling. He assures Julia that Faulkland's excessive love for her is the source of all his folly and all will be well as soon as she marries him. They are soon joined by the rest of the party and Sir Lucius declares that he is happy in the happiness of others. Bob Acres congratulates the newly engaged lovers and announces his decision to convene a dance party at the New Rooms in the evening, in honour of them. Sir Anthony joins in the expression of all round joy and proposes to drink to the health of the couples and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop. The couples now also congratulate each other. Faulkland remarks that Lydia checked her romantic fancies in time and Julia did a lot to mend his temper; thus they both deserve being applauded. Absolute also joins in the sentiments and the scene ends with a sentimental sermon from the sober-minded Julia on the virtues of married love. Let them not try to be much happy in their happiness because excess of passion will soon disappear leaving the dross behind. So let them try to be virtuous and only moderately happy.

Critical Hints : The scene is a fine example of Sheridan's clever handling of plot. All the characters have been dexterously brought to the duel scene and are soon reconciled. Sir Anthony does what no one had done so far, asking everybody the cause for his offence. The trifling causes are disclosed, explained and settled to the satisfaction of all.

The scene is one of the best from the point of view of humour and entertainment. It is well-nigh farcical. Bob Acres' cowardice is disclosed to the full and the way his courage oozes out of his palms is a matter of boisterous fun and gentle satire. Similarly Mrs. Malaprop's unashamed embarrassment is also a case for satirical fun. She is still as foolish as ever and has not even the delicacy and decency to check her romantic fooleries. The humorous remarks of Sir Anthony for her are quite soft ; she actually deserved more severe handling.

The Epilogue—Its nature and purpose : An epilogue is a short speech in which a playwright means to humour his audience at the end of the play, for its trouble and indulgence. In this case it was read out by Mrs Bulkley who played the part of Julia. This epilogue particularly flatters the vanity of women, on whom, says Sheridan, depends all the social happiness of men.

Summary : Sheridan begins by saying that the most obvious moral of his play—if a moral has got to be detected—is, that men's social happiness depends upon women. He adds that although love was the thing that brought charm to the play, it were women who guided the plot. Let the importance of women be not doubted since men of all ranks pay their compliments to women and obey them. The citizen who takes his dinner abroad does so with the permission of his wife. The landlord may rule the whole day over others, but at home waits upon the pleasure of his wife. Similarly the drunkard might curse his friends and quarrel with them till he gets dead drunk swearing in the name of his wife and imagining himself kissing her while drinking the brimming cup. The big statesmen take the advice of their wives before doing anybody any favour. Among the classes of lower rank the wife is equally important. The poor peasant's whole happiness is derived from his wife, who is his light in darkness and warmth in winter. So is the case with the sailor who wanders for long on the seas only to embrace his wife at the end of his voyage. The soldier suffers all his pains on the battle-field to reward himself with his wife's smiles at the end. Her sighs, heard from afar, make him sad and unspirited. The men of refinement, however, desire wit and intellectual attainments

also in women, in addition to beauty and charms. In case women have these accomplishments men will certainly always take their guidance from them. Gallant lovers who look to their wives for inspiration will feel ashamed of their weaknesses and try to be wise and learned. Their love will kindle the flame of knowledge also in them.

SELECTED CRITICAL OPINIONS ON THE RIVALS

(1)

An extravagant hyperbole of Byron's as to the relative excellence of Sheridan's plays has perhaps done him some harm,* but his three best pieces are of extraordinary merit. They were all produced between 1775 and 1779 ; each is a masterpiece in its kind : and the kinds are not identical. *The Rivals* is an artificial comedy, inclining on one side to farce, and in the parts of Faulkland and Julia, to the sentimental. But it is, on its own rather artificial plan, constructed with remarkable skill and tightness ; and the characters of Sir Anthony Absolute, Mrs. Malaprop, Sir Lucius O'Trigger and Bob Acres, with almost all the rest, combine fun with at least theatrical verisimilitude in a very rare way. Indeed, Sir Anthony and Mrs. Malaprop, though heightened from life, can hardly be said to be false to it, and though in the other pair the licence of dramatic exaggeration is pushed to its farthest, it is not exceeded. The effect could not have been produced without the sparkling dialogue, but this alone could not have given it. *The School for Scandal* flies higher, but not quite so steadily. Pedants of construction fall more foul of it, and even those who do not accept their standards must admit that the characters are less uniformly alive. But they, like the play, generally aim higher ; it is no longer artificial comedy with stock personages, but a great comic castigation of manners that is attempted. In *The Rivals* Sheridan had vied with Vanbrugh and had beaten him : in *The School for Scandal* he challenges Maliere, and is hardly beaten except in a certain universality.

Saintsbury :*A A Short History of English Literature.*

Whatever Sheridan has done or chosen to do has been *par excellence*, always the *best* of its kind"—Byron.

(2)

The Rivals, though it can be seen with joy even by persons who do not regard the theatre with extraordinary attention, is even better to read, and not merely because you can then skin Faulkland and Julia if you choose. That it is quite free from artificiality nobody in his senses would maintain. But Sheridan has had the wit to give the artificiality itself that touch of burlesquing sincerer examples of it which saves everything. The piece is a kind of *feerie* : it might not improperly conclude with the transformation of the good old kind, and an immortal harlequinade in which Sir Lucius and Lydia, Sir Anthony and Bob Acres find their places ready cut out for them, while Mrs. Malaprop would add a new star to the cheerful old constellation of *comedie dell' arte* : comedy of Masks. It must be from lack of imagination, which cannot see the pretence at once of fairy tale and farce, that anybody can find fault with its plot, and fail to discover in it the brilliance of *The School for Scandal*. The fact is that there is nothing else quite like *The Rivals* and the complaints of plagiarism, etc., are even more imbecile than usual. You must indeed be clever if you can parody without, in a manner, plagiarising. *The Rivals*, as has been said, is like nothing else—at least nothing that came before it. Malapropism may go back through the recent work of Smollett .. through Swift to Shakespeare ; the testy father is as old even in criticism, as the *Epistle to the Pisos* and heaven knows how much older in drama : the comic Irishman, though he only now comes to his own, is, though in another sense, of almost as ancient a house as he could himself claim, and Bob Acres' ancestors were born with the comic drama. But in all the immense bulk and range of our theatre you will find no whole piece of quite the same kind ; nor will you if you extend the search to the houses of Moliere or of Calderson. And as Sheridan has here no predecessor in fee, so he has had no exact successor, despite the immense popularity of the thing, and beyond all doubt, numerous attempts at imitation. His sole heir, and that in a transformed fashion, was the late Sir William Gilbert.

—Saintsbury : *The Peace of the Augustans.*

(3)

The Rivals presents, not an admixture of Shakespearian humour with features of the school of manners, but the very atmosphere of Congreve modified by exaggerated humours of the Jonsonian type. The names of the characters are mostly of the humours sort—Sir Lucius O'Trigger, Sir Anthony Absolute, and Lydia Languish may be taken as examples—and the exaggeration of special traits is well shown in the notorious Mrs. Malaprop. In the main this comedy presents a direct challenge to the sentimentalists, although in the Julia and Faulkland portions there are evident features of the Cumberland style. Lydia's love of a romantic elopement, however, and her fantastic notions of a lover's duties are clearly modelled as satires on the yet popular style. *The Rivals*, as a whole, is a somewhat disappointing play. Some scenes in it are so excellent that we notice all the more clearly the weaknesses in the whole plan. Sentimental motives clash with elements taken from the Congreve school, Jonsonian exaggeration conflicts heavily with the play of wit and fancy. About the whole play, too breathes an atmosphere of farce, and although there is something of farce in every great comedy, this lower strain tends to weaken the general effect of Sheridan's work.

—Allardyce Nicoll : *British Drama.*

(4)

If Goldsmith marks an attempt to return to Elizabethan comedy, an attempt wherein he stood almost alone, Richard Brinsley Sheridan shows the movement back to the Restoration masters. Only two dramas, if we except *A Trip to Scarborough* (Drury Lane, Feb. 1777) as a fairly poor effort to make Vanbrugh's *The Relapse* fit for the audiences of the time, fall within the purview of this section. Of these, *The Rivals* (Covent Garden. Jan. (1775) was Sheridan's first play, a comedy which, because of some satirical references to the Irish, was greeted with somewhat riotous disapproval on the first and second nights of performance. *The Rivals* is a good, but by no means a brilliant, comedy. The continuous stream of infelicitous verbiage which flows from the mouth of Mrs. Malaprop, begins after a time to pall, and the idiosyncrasies

of Lydia Languish are over-emphasized. The satire of sentimental self-torture in Faulkland is well carried out, but again, as with Goldsmith, the last scene of the play introduces a form of sentimentalism which is no longer burlesque, and which clashes rather hopelessly with the rest of the play. Seen on the stage as read in the study, *The Rivals* is found to be a thing of shreds and patches, and even if those patches were once parts of royal garments, their juxtaposition can hardly be regarded as harmonious. Perhaps literary criticism has made too much of this play, too.

—Allardyce Nicoll : *A History of Late Eighteenth Century Drama.*

(5)

Like Goldsmith, Sheridan could not at once rid himself wholly of the contagion of the sentimentality which he attacked. Consciously, or not, he allowed the Faulkland underplot to retain in some measure the conventional phrasing of sentimental drama. Though Faulkland is a humour' character, in whom jealousy is carried to comic exaggeration, some of his and Julia's speeches seem rather an unconscious echo of sentimental diction than raillery at its extravagance Julia's speech which concludes the play may serve for a single illustration : "while Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future Bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting—when Hearts deserving Happiness would unite their fortunes, virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest hurtless flowers: but ill judging Passion will force the gaudier Rose into wreaths whose thorn offends them—when its Leaves are dropt!' This sentimental strain no doubt largely explains favourable comments, even in the midst of general strictures upon the first performance of the play, such as the following : 'The character of Faulkland is touched with a delicate and masterly hand' and Faulkland, in most respects, a new, and a very good character......Julia (considered in the line of elegant, and sentimental comedy) is an honour to the drama'.

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Neither occasional traces of sentimental diction nor minor

flaws in dramatic structure have seriously endangered the vitality of *The Rivals*. The main action is developed through a constant succession of effective stage situation. The quarrel scene between Sir Anthony Absolute and his son, the scenes of Mrs. Malaprop and the duel would, in themselves, command interest, but their effectiveness is enhanced by their position as vital links in the chain of dramatic action. Like Goldsmith Sheridan prefers 'expectation' to 'surprise' as a dramatic motive. At the outset Fag exclaims that Captain Absolute and Ensign Beverley 'are one and the same person'. In the postulates of plot Sheridan seems more natural than Goldsmith. His use of 'mistaken identity' and 'cross-purposes' results in a comedy of errors more plausible than Goldsmith's mistake of a night.

If there are farcical suggestions in *The Rivals* they arise rather from character than from plot. The very names of the *dramatis personae* suggest their kinship with 'humour comedy'. The accentuation of individual traits of character is, however, not confined to names like Languish, Malaprop, O'Trigger, Absolute, Acres and Fag. Faulkland's'humour' is unreasonable jealousy, as clearly as that of Sir Lucius O'Trigger is love of fighting. Furthermore, *The Rivals* introduces two highly developed artificial humours in the *'Oath referential'* or *'sentimental swearing'* of Bob Acres, and in Mrs Malaprop's nice derangement of epithets'. Like Dickens, Sheridan often outlines character with broad strokes that suggest caricature. Yet it should be remembered that it is easier to justify exaggeration in the dramatist than in the novelist, and that Shakespeare bestowed upon Mrs. Quickly abnormal perversity in the use of her 'oracular' tongue, whatever aspersions may be cast upon her 'parts of speech'. Mrs. Malaprop remains, among a host of dramatic predecessors and imitators, the unrivalled 'queen of dictionary'. Doubtless Sheridan lacks subtlety in the analysis of character, but he has an exceptional sense of theatrical effectiveness. The courage of Bob Acres dwindles to the actual vanishing point when he feels his valour 'oozing out as it were at the palms of his hands' but the very exaggeration of cowardice enhances the acting possibilities of the duel scene. The 'passion' of Sir Anthony Absolute mounts to sheer hyperbole but heightens the dramatic clonimax of the quarrel scene with his son. If there are suggestions of farcical exaggeration

and unrestraint in Sheridan's delineation of character, he has, at last, extraordinarily effective dramatic art.

In the dialogue, as in character portrayal, Sheridan has the same brilliant artificiality. He sacrifices naturalness on the altar of wit. Unlike honest Diggorg, Fag and David vie in wit with their masters. Pope's question—'Tell me if Congreve's fools are fools indeed?' might be applied to Sheridan. Lucy's cleverness outwits Mrs Malaprop, and her arch coquetry captivates Sir Lucius. Even the sentimentalexcrescences of the underplot do not long interrupt the brilliant vivacity of Sheridan's dialogue. *The Rivals* is the initial work of a dramatist of twenty three. If it fails to hold the mirror up to nature, it has, nonetheless, splendid audacity and fertility of dramatic invention and wit. It remains a triumph of artificial comedy.

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A dramatic artist, not a deep interpreter of life, Sheridan brilliantly touched the surface without sounding the depths. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in his philosophy. He was, indeed, no dreamer. His eyes sought the immediate foreground, not the far horizon. In the wood outside of Athens he might have recognised Nick Bottom and his fellows, while Oberon and Titania flitted past unheeded. Sheridan's world, in reality, was Bath and London. Even Lydia Languish, who sought a sentimental elopement to shock society, would have been a sorry exile in the Forest of Arden. Wit rather than humour, brilliancy rather than depth, satire rather than sympathy, art rather than nature, are the characteristics of Sheridan's comedies. Unable to follow Shakespeare through the depths of the comedie humaine', Sheridan wisely chose, under the leadership of the comic dramatists of Restoration, to pursue the easier path of the comedy of manners.

'Judged merely by the test of continued stage popularity, Sheridan stands today in English drama second only to Shakespeare. The professional verdict of the modern stage is well expressed in the words of Sir Henry Irving: "Sheridan brought the comedy of manners to the highest perfection, and *The School for Scandal* remains to this day the most popular comedy in the English language. Some

of the characters both in this play and in *The Rivals* have become so closely associated with our current speech that we may fairly regard them as imperishable. No farce of our time has so excellent a chance of immortality as *The Critic.* The history of the development of English drama since the opening of the theatres in 1660 reaches a significant climax in Sheridan. He is at once the heir to the best traditions of Restoration comedy and the most notable English dramatist of the eighteeth century.

—Nettleton : *English Drama of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century.*

(6)

The Rivals to the ordinary spectators............is so little like a transcript from any actual conditions of humanity that to consider it as studied from the life would be absurd and we receive these creations of fancy as belonging to a world entirely apart from the real. But the reader who has accompanied Sheridan through the previous chapter of his story will be inclined on the contrary to feel that the young dramatists has but selected a few incidents, from the still more curious comedy of life.........in which elopements, duels, secret correspondences, and all the rest simple, artificial round were the order of the day........*The Rivals* is no such picture of life in Bath as that which, half a century later, in altered times, which yet were full of humours of their own, Miss Austen made for us in all the modest flutter of youthful life and hopes. Sheridan's brilliant dramatic sketch is slight in comparison, though far more instantly effective, and with a concentration in its sharp effects,.........Scarcely ever was a play so full of liveliness and interest constructed upon a slighter machinery. The Rivals of the title, by means of the most simple yet amusing of mystifications, are one person.........Thus the whole action of the piece turns upon a mystification which affords some delightfully comic scenes, but few of those occasions of suspense and uncertainty which give interest to the drama. This we find in the brisk and delightful movement of the piece, in the broad but most amusing tketches of character, and the unfailing wit and sparkle of the dialogue......So completely do Sir Anthony's

fits of temper and Mrs. Malaprop's fine language and stately presence and the swagger of Bob Acres occupy and amuse us. Even Faulkland, the jealous and doubting husband, is so laughable.

Mrs. Malaprop's ingenious "derangement of epitaphs" is her chief distinction to the popular critic and even though such a great competitor as Dogberry has occupied the ground before her, these delightful absurdities have never been surpassed.......................Mrs. Malaprop has none of the harshness of Mrs. Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer* and we take it onkind of Captain Absolute to call her "a weather-beaten she-dragon". The complacent nod of her head, the smirk on her face, her delightful self-satisfaction and confidence in her "parts of speech" have nothing repulsive in them......And she is not unkind to Lydia, though the minx deserves it, and has no desire to appropriate her fortune...... Sir Anthony, though so amusing on the stage, is more conventional, since we know he must get angry presently whenever we meet with him although his coming round again is equally certain.........

The other characters, though full of brilliant talk, cleverness and folly, have less originality......while Mrs Malaprop can hold her ground with Dogberry, Bob Acres is not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with the exquisite reasons of that delightful knight, Sir Andrew Aguecheek. And thus it becomes at once apparent that Sheridan's eye for a situation and the details that make up a striking combination on the stage, was far more remarkable than his insight into human motives and action. There is no scene on the stage which retains its power of amusing an ordinary audience more brilliantly than that of the proposed duel, where the wittiest of boobies confesses to feeling his valour ooze out at his finger's ends.........the two men (Bob and Sir Lucius) are little more than symbols of the slightest description, but their dialogue is instinct with wit, and then that fun, the most English of qualities, which does not reach the height of humour, yet overwhelms even gravity itself with a laughter in which there is no sting or bitterness. Moliere sometimes attains this effect, but rarely, having too much meani g in him, but with Shakespeare it is frequent among higher things. And in

Sheridan this gift of innocent ridicule and quick embodiment of the ludicrous without malice or *arriere-pensee* reaches to such heights of excellence as have given his nonsense a sort of immortality.

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Sheridan's art, from the beginning, was theatrical. . . .rather than dramatic. It aimed at strong situations and highly effective scenes rather than at a finely constructed story, or the working out of either plot or passion. There is nothing in it to be discovered by the students. . . .it is possible to excite a very warm controversy in almost any company of ordinarily educated people at any time upon the character of Hamlet. And critics will always find something to say even upon the less profound but delightful mysteries of such poetical creation as Rosalind. . . .But the lighter drama with which we have now to deal hides no depths under its brilliant surface. The pretty fantastical Lydia with her romances, her impatience of ordinary life, her hot little spark of temper, was new to the stage, . . .but there is nothing further to find out about her. The art is charming, the figures full of vivacity, the touch that sets them before us exquisite; except indeed in the Faulkland scenes, probably intended as a foil to the brilliancy of the other, in which Julia's magnificent phrases are too much for us, and make us deeply grateful to Sheridan for the discrimination. . . .which kept him from the serious drama. But there are no depths to be sounded, and no suggestions to be carried out. While, however, its merits as literature are thus lessened, its attractions as a play are increased.

There never was a comedy more dear to actors, and never was one more popular on the stage. The even balance of the characters, the equality of the parts, scarcely one of them being quite insignificant, and each affording scope for a good player to show what is in him, must make it always popular in the profession. It is for the same reason, the delight of the amateurs.

—Mrs. Oliphant : *Sheridan*.

(7)

The Rivals. . . .an amazing feat in comedy for a young man

of twenty-two, not much resembling life indeed, but full of whim, and wit and theatrical activity. . . .A period of only one month separated the first appearance of *The Rivals* from that of *Le Barbier de Seville* and it is not unworthy of notice that Sheridan is in a certain sense the Beaumarchais of the English stage. Each of these playwrights marked the return of theatrical taste to the Moliere ideal of conventional comedy after a brief interval of *dramelarmoyante*. In Sheridan's case the direct inspiration came, not so much from Moliere, as from the masters of English Restoration comedy, whose merits he imitated with a happy exclusion of their worst faults.

—Sir Edmund Gosse : *Eighteenth Century Literature*.

(8)

Of *The Rivals*, which is a miracle as a first play, Sheridan's own opinion was very modestly expressed, and Moore in his Diary goes as far as to affirm that "Sheridan always said that *The Rivals* was one of the worst plays in the language and he would have given anything he had not to have written it." It is a comedy which acts far better than it reads, and this accounts for the patronising tone of the opinions expressed by some contemporary periodicals. A typical example of this critical myopia appears in *Gentleman's Magazine* : "The dialogue of the comedy is, in general, natural and pleasing. As to the plot, though we have often heard of young brothers and fortune hunters assuming fictitious titles and estates as credentials to rich heiresses, it seems very unlikely that real rank and fortune should be deemed an objection, therefore disclaimed as in piece before us. Here the marvellous and the romantic seem to lose sight of the natural and probable." The immediate propularity of the play lay partly in the skill with which Sheridan combined the wit and elegance of a manners' comedy, freed from all immodesty of the Restoration pattern, with scenes of sentimentality which could be played 'straight' or treated ironically. It is more difficult to account for the permanent power which the play has possessed over audiences in the theatre. Sheridan seemed to have some innate knowledge of the conventions of the stage. His characterization is broad. and indeed in Mrs. Malaprop it may be urged that it is too broad. Still consistently gives magnificent opportunities to

the players. The plot, which would not serve for a novel, holds together admirably, in the theatre. The exposition is quickly, even entertaingly given and the purely comic plot is mingled with the sentimental. The whole has elegance and one is again reminded that while morals make men good, it is manners that make them interesting. One of the most original thing in the play is the dialogue. This is Sheridan's own invention. It is sometimes said that Shaw makes all his characters witty or at least amusing, but so do Congreve and Sheridan and Wilde. If the characters talked as they would do in real life they would be unbearably dull, but a 'nice derangement of epithets' makes them entertaining and despite the fact that Sheridan is writing in prose he would seem to have learned from Shakespeare this way of giving a wash of fine words to the play."

—Prof. B. Ifor. Evans: *A Short H story of English Drama.*

(9)

The Rivals is a farce, not a comedy, and is mainly remarkable for the vivid picture it gives of eighteenth-century life ; though this may be done by types, the types are given at least as much by characterisation as by ' verbal felicities." Lydia is grown a headstrong girl, her head turned by reading, and this trait is introduced so subtly, so much as if it were only an excuse for what was then a topical laugh, that we are apt to overlook the deeper significance of her passion for the circulating library. Through her, as through Faulkland, Sheridan is having a shrewd hit at two well-known eighteenth-century types. Again, Mrs. Malaprop is so famous for her "nice derangement of epitaphs" that it is seldom noticed how her vulgarity stands out against the courtly refinement of Sir Anthony. Mrs. Malaprop's airs are the direct result of living in Bath. She is the provincial woman desperately trying to live up to the smartness of Bath, and be not too far behind London at the same time. In this, she is allied to Goldsmith's Mrs. Hardcastle, though it must not be thought that yet another model is being suggested for the original of Lydia's aunt. Sir Anthony himself gives a truly remarkable instance of the breeding that made it possible for his son so to humour the whims of Miss

Languish when no one will take Mrs. Malaprop at the end of the play. Whilst making quite clear that he does not intend to be saddled with her himself, he alone comes to her rescue and tides over the situation with a speech at once charming but definite. "At night," he says, "we single lads will drink a health to the young couples and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop."

The subsidiary lovers have been much criticised and were one of the causes that nearly wrecked the play on its first night. It is true that Faulkland's baseless jealousy becomes wearisome, but Sheridan quite possibly intended them to be tedious, and so show up, among their livelier fellows, as the types of lovers prevailing in sentimental comedy. Whether this was so or not, at least it is not hard for us to regard the as such ; and, if they are not taken too seriously, and the absurdity of their quarrels should prevent that, they are, in their very foolishness, amusing.

The dialogue of this play, though lacking the polished sparkle of *The School for Scandal*, is fresh and vigorous, and if it does not linger in the ear for its own sake, it goes well with the farcical action. It is, however, for its picture of Bath that *The Rivals* presents most interest now.

—Robert Herring : *Introduction to The Rivals*.

(10)

With him, however, comedy regains, in addition to the shining beauty of form, almost all the ease of movement it had with a Congreve. Here the joy of feast of the mind, in which satire speaks to the intelligence more than to the moral sense, suffices unto itself. It is fed by sallies of the most fertile verse ; and a gift of style equal to that of the best classical writers secures for every line a quality of finished art.

This liberty with regard to any moralizing aim on the part of the author is further completed by a critical independence towards sentiment. While in Bath and London, Sheridan had frequented the circles of fashion, where the cult of wit and irony was sharpened into a disparaging hostility to the puritanism of middle class. In such surroundings he had beathed a belated remnant of the atmosphere of the Resto-

ration. No doubt, the desire for sincere simplicity which forms the deeper strain of his nature revolts against the artificiality of such aims ; he writes his most amusing comedy against the poisoned slander of the drawing-rooms ; but he is too much the master of epigram to make it really hateful to us ; his thesis has scarcely any power of conviction, and is only a pretext for sparkling dialogues. His own ideal is that of a lively and spontaneous light-heartedness the carefree temper of which conceals the best instincts.

The Rivals is a youthful, gay, comedy of no great substance, but one in which the (joyous fancy of the author creates an atmosphere of almost poetical unreality, on a ground of limitation—memories of the Restoration, and of Moliere—where stand out figures that are new, or appear to be so. Without daring to disappoint the public completely in its sentimental expectation, the play outlines in the name of sound reason a reaction of temperament and taste against the whole range of pre-Romantic preferences.

—Legouis and Cazamian : *A History of English Literature.*

(11)

His comedies were comedies of society, the most amusing ever written, but merely comedies of society. Imagine exaggerated caricatures artists are wont to improvise in a drawing room, where they are intimate, about eleven in the evening. His first play, *The Rivals*......is loaded with these and scarcely anything else. There is Mrs. Malaprop, a silly pretentious woman, who uses grand words higgledy-piggledy, delighted with herself, in "a nice derangement of epitaphs", before her names and declaring that her niece is as headstrong 'as an allegory on the banks of the Nile'. There is Mr. Acres, who suddenly becomes a hero, gets engaged in the duel, and being led on the ground, calculates the effect of the balls, thinks of his will, burial, embalmment, and wishes he were at home. There is another in the pe·son of a clumsy and cowardly servant, of an irascibl- and brawling father, of a sentimental and domestic young lady, of a touchy Irish duellist. All this jogs and jostles on without much order, amid the surprises of a twofold plot, by the aid of expedients and *recontres*, without the full and regular government of a dominating idea, but in

vain, for one perceives it is a patch work. The high spirits carry off everything ; we laugh heartily ; every single scene has its facetious and rapid movement, we forget that the clumsy valet makes remarks as worthy as Sheridan himself, and the irascible gentleman speaks as well as the most elegant of writers. The playwright is also a man of letters. If, through mere animal and social spirits, he wishes to amuse others and to amuse himself he does not forget the interests of his talent and the care for his reputation. He has taste, he appreciates refinements of style, the worth of a new image, of a striking contrast, of a witty and well considered insinuation. He has, above all, wit, a wonderful conversational wit, the art of rousing and sustaining the attention, of being sharp, varied, of taking his hearers unawares, of throwing in a repartee, of setting folly in relief or accumulating one after another witticisms and happy phrases.

—Taine.

(12)

Though the emotional refinements of Faulkland and Julia are quite in the sentimental drama and equally dull, the remainder of the play is wholly in comic vein—with the spirit of Farquhar and the wit of Congreve. The main situation is farcical or at least theatrical—a young spark making love under an assumed name to the very girl designed for him by his irascible father—and the accompanying incidents and persons might seem drawn from the repertory of theatre ; but their creator knew Bath and had eloped with a reigning beauty and fought two duels and he had the wit to give the old situations both verisimilitude and vivacity and to inspirit the characters and their juxtapositions with a new comic force. The art of heightening by contrast the comic aspects of character has rarely been exhibited more amazingly than in the conversations of Mrs. Malaprop and Bob Acres with the others and more exquisitely than in the dialogues between Capt. Absolute and his father, Sir Anthony. Bob Acres and Mrs. Malaprop are doubtless caricatures, but they are the work of a genius. The coward reluctantly engaged in a duel is one of the oft-repeated situations of the stage, but nowhere worked out so effectively as here. Every bit of the elabora-

tion counts—his boorish gaiety that irks the sombre Faulkland, his dressing, his learning to dance—his confidence with his servant, the challenge, and all the complications of the duel. At every m ment his follies shine in contrast to the absurdities of others, especially to the ebullient pugnacity of Sir Lucius. Like Bob Acres, Mrs. Malaprop has a great stage part and is always presented in dramatic contrast with other persons, but she would be magnificent even alone and in monologue. How easy it is to invent malapropism, once you have been shown how and yet of all the specimens produced are there any such masterpieces of the originator—"He is the very pine-apple of politeness", a 'nice derangement of epitaphs', 'was it you that reflected on my parts of speech'.

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Is this picture of life (as presented in *The School for Scandal*) any more than comic ? Is it real or true or important ? It certainly does not reflect a mind seriously concerned over the problems of society as do the plays of Ibsen and Bernard Shaw. Nor does it reflect the manners and social views of a period with any such clearness as do the comedies of Etherege and Wycherley. We are not quite sure whether the manners of Sheridan's comedies belong to his own or to an earlier age, whether they are drawn from life or from preceding drama. We can scarcely assert that they present a profound or searching study of the universality of human behaviour. They were the work of a young man witty, a great dramatist and a great humourist. His powers as dramatist are displayed in design, in dialogue, in a most effective representation of comic characters. His powers as a humourist are to be found in a wit that is unequalled in readiness and abundance, in the high spirits which will find a laugh anywhere, and in a view of mankind which discovers plenty that is amusing without probing too deeply. If his representation of life seems sometimes artificial or theatrical, it is well to remember that it is unique. Is there any other picture of English society so vivid and so entertaining as *The School for Scandal* ?

Sheridan had no rivals and few followers. It is absurd to say that his successors revived the comedy of manners and killed the sentimental species. It would be nearer the truth

to say that he killed the old form. No one could emulate him, and with his plays virtually ends the great tradition that began with Dryden and Etherege but had been sadly lapsing after Farquhar, until this later bloom in Murphy, Goldsmith and Sheridan. There were, of course, plays of this type after Sheridan but none of importance. Farces and light comedies still preferred the comic to tearful ; lively intrigues, low comic scenes, and even attempts at wit were to be found in sentimental pieces, but only rarely an attempt was made to write high comedy that was held amusing and witty.

—Thorndike : *English Comedy*.

(13)

The interest of *The Rivals* is primarily theatrical. The play has successfully held the stage from its second performance with Quick as Acres to its modern presentation with Joseph Jefferson in the same role......The connection of the sub-plot with the main plot is, moreover, so slight that no loss is experienced as a result of amputation. Even though Faulkland's finespun jealousies are the object of mild ridicule and though he serves as foil to the romantic Lydia, the audience, which has to listen to the utterance of his self-torturing suspicions will inevitably be bored. But in the main plot, there is not a dull moment. The audience from the first is led into the Absolute-Beverly secret, and it soon learns of the trick that is being played on Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Rejoicing in its superior knowledge it is delighted in seeing how the mystified characters act in the complications which they could not foresee. So we have the highly comic scenes of Acres arousing Faulkland's jealousy about Julia : of Sir Anthony's proposing a marriage to his son, each working at cross purposes, of Lucy's dupliaries, of Captain Absolute appearing his father, of his posing as Beverley and his securing Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia and of his own discomfiture of revelation, of his pose of Acres challenging Beverley and of the final clearing up on the duelling field. We are tickled when we see some persons who think they are controlling events caught by their own cleverness and others seem to be the victims of circumstance blundering into good luck ; we laugh when a person for whom a trap is laid walks promptly into it,

or when the characters wholly misunderstand each other, and appear highly ridiculous to all but themselves ; and we are vastly entertained when Bob Acres tries to bolster up a sinking courage and is treated as if he were a reckless fire-eater.

We have likewise the same theatrical pleasure in the characters and their words as we have in their actions. Sir Anthony's choleric temper will always amuse any audience ; Bob Acres with his referential oaths and his inflated courage is a perpetual joy ; Mrs. Malaprop arranges "epitaphs" to the unfailing delight of all who hear aspersions cast on her parts of speech. One is hurried along with such speed in the constant bustle of the action and the rapid fire of dialogue that no time remains to question the reasonableness of the characters or their speeches. Apart from the excitement of the theatre, one realizes that Sir Anthony is made more precipitate that he would be in actual life, that Bob Acres manages his account of Julia's conduct too well for the occasion and that he manufactures oaths too cleverly for the blockhead he is, that Mrs. Malaprop is so much the queen of the dictionary, that one sees designs of the part of her creator. But on the board Sheridan's cleverness captures his audience before it has time to protest.

The exuberance of Sheridan's humour indeed, carries his audience off its feet. It has all the marks of youth and genius, "rather" as Brander Matthews says, the frank feeling for fun and appreciation of the incongruous. . . .than the deeper and broader humour which we see at its full in Moliere and Shakespeare. One fully realises that the leading characters are superficially portrayed—Sir Anthony, Mrs. Malaprop and Acres—that Sheridan does not touch in this play the springs of laughter that life so close in the springs of tears. A youth of twenty-three could not plumb such comic depths or by means of humorous revelations make us know Falcambridge or Falstaff. The humour of *The Rivals* is more "abundantly laughter-compelling" than the extremely clever wit of *The School for Scandal*. Indeed Sheridan in the earlier play seems more like the youthful Shakespeare of rollicking comedies while in the later plays he resembles the finished artist of the Restoration comedy who wrote *The Way of the World*.

—Prof. F. Tupper and Prof. James Tupper.

(14)

Nobody can suggest that Sheridan's knowledge went very deep, but so far as it did go it was genu ne. His characters are very seldom portraits ; as a rule, they are gently caricatured. But the stage has a way of being most life when it is a little larger than life and nearly all Sheridan's people are recognizable types containing their own inner vitality. The reason is that they were all observed directly from life . . . Because they are not portraits, and because their creator was no more than a lively youth at the time when he brought them into existence, none of these people have very much heart. But it would be unsuitable if they had, for Sheridan's first impulse towards dramatic writing was always satiric ; and in such works any attempt at emotional writing must have devolved into sentimentality.

(15)

Darlington.

Like Goldsmith, he reverted to classical comedy and chose, as the basis of his plot, the marriage conflict between parent and child which had come down from Terence through Italian and French theatres. A father and an aunt arrange a suitable marriage for their respective son and niece, while the young people have already chosen for themselves. Out of this hackneyed situation he extracted the equally hackneyed humours of mistaken identity and of domestic discord, but with a dramatic sense which borders on ge ius. Miss Lydia Languish and Captain Absolute are the young pair destined for each other. Unknown to their elders, they are already mutually in love ; but, as Lydia has fallen a victim to the craze for sentimentality, the wealthy Captain pretends to be the penniless ensign Beverley, so that their union may be to her, unquestionably, a marriage of love. This attempt at a double impersonation brings about some brilliant complications Familiar figures in domestic and social life are thrown off their guard and betrayed with admirable felicity, into weaknesses and absurdities generally hidden from the public eye, and the enjoyment of the spectators is all the more complete because the characters are working for the same and frustate their several effors through misunderstandings.

The Rivals (1775) is a comedy of incident, the excellence of which is partly to be found in action. Its characterisation is, in essence, conventional and shows less knowledge of human nature than does Goldsmith's work. Captain Absolute, the generous, impulsive youth, Sir Anthony, the testy headstrong father, Fag and Lucy, the menials who minister to their employers' intrigues, are as old as Latin comedy. Bob Acres, the blustering coward is akin to Sir Andrew Aguecheek and had trod the stage in Jonson's learned sock; Sir Lucius O'Trigger is related to Cumberland's O' Flaherty ; Mrs. Malaprop has a long pedigree, including Dogberry, Lady Froth, Mrs. Slipslop and Tabitha Bramble. Yet, apart from the actual business on the stage, these characters are irresistible. As in the case of Goldsmith, Sheridan's importance is found in the new wine which he poured into old bottles. The Georgian public expected in their plays a certain piquancy which should remind them of social or domestic life. But, whereas authors of the sentimental school flavoured their work with emotions pertaining to women's affairs, Sheridan perceived that there was another element of good breeding, quite different but equally modern. The expansion of the British Empire had called into existence a virile and energetic governing class of soldiers and politicians. This aristocracy felt, as deeply as any 'jessamy' or 'macroni', the humanising influence of polite learning and domestic refinement yet with a difference. As society set a value on delicate attentions, sympathetic and discerning compliments, subtle tunes of phrase and gracefulness of manner, these arts were cultivated as an accomplishment in order to maintain social supremacy. The class in question did not, like sentimentalists, affect strong passions beneath a veneer of politeness but, rather, a superb serenity which rose superior to all emotion. Drawing-room diplomacy had often appeared in letters and memoirs ; but Sheridan was the first writer to make it the essence of a play. Despite the conventionality of the character drawing and some of the situations, *The Rivals* has an atmosphere which satisfies this ideal. As each figure moves and speaks on the stage, the reader is conscious of a coterie whose shibboleth was distinction—a coterie whose conversation regarded the most commonplace topics as worthy of its wit, which abhorred eccentricity and smiled at all those who, like Fag, Sir Anthony, Faulkland,

Mrs. Malaprop and Bob Acres, fell short of the rule of easy self-possession.

—H.V. Routh : *The Cambridge History of English Literature* (Vol. XI. Chap. XII)

(16)

The stumbling block of *The Rivals*, both to the reader and to the theatrical producer, are the scenes between Faulkland and Julia. It has been held and held by so acute a critic as Augustine Birrel, that these two are survivors from the earlier period of taste, that they are still hopelessly entangled in the thicket of sentiments ; that they are 'boring lovers'. But Birrel writes from the library and for the library, he is not a theatre-goer and indeed thinks very little of the stage and those that minister to it. He may be right but in this instance a little study of the effect of Julia and Faulkland in performance would prove to him that Sheridan knew very well what he was doing and that if Faulkland and Julia are dull, as they can be, the fault lies not with him but in the imagination of the reader or the interpretation of the actor, as the case may be. For it is, or should be, as clear as daylight that in writing these scenes, Sheridan was not making a concession but framing an indictment, they are burlesque in the manner of some of the scenes in *The Critic*. Whether a sudden incursion into parody is legitimate in a play which sets out to be, and generally is, comedy of manners, is another and separate question, but none who has seen the play well acted can doubt the truth of my assertion and the mistake of Birrel. And I am not saying that. *The Rivals* incomparably better though it is than any play of the period that preceded it, is really, judged by the highest standards, a masterpiece. It is not.

—Playfair : *Introduction to the Plays of Sheridan.*

(17)

There are parts, however, of *The Rivals* which are generally considered to be blemishes and to sink below the more uniform excellence of *The School for Scandal* : these are the scenes between Julia and Faulkland. I have no doubt that the

sentimentality of these characters—especially of Faulkand—has been greatly exaggerated, by contemporaries for praise, and by posterity for blame. Faulkland, indeed, is a true sentimentalist of the school generally condmned by Sheridan, but in all the scenes in which he appears without Julia, and I believe, in those too in which he appears with her, he is treated in a spirit of genuine comedy : his 'humour' rouses much less sympathy than laughter. Julia, however, is never laughable, except in so far as she heightens the ludicrousness of Faulkland, and it seems probable that she was devised as a prop to the Drury Lane audience's passion for sentimentality. Sheridan felt he could not forebear to laugh at his sentimentalists. The result of the divided aim has been indifferent success. It jars us now to suspect sometimes that Julia and Faulkland are being treated seriously, as it jarred contemporaries to suspect them laughed at.

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Another charge which has been brought aganist Sheridan is that of plagiarism, and the accusation has been supported by a hundred pieces of evidence. The defence, however, is now as familiar as it is conclusive. A work of art is not any more than a human being or a vegetable, a spontaneous growth, unconditioned by the time and place and circumstances of its creation. It is born with a literary ancestry, and it can escape not more easily or completely from its ancestral traditions than a man from the traditions of his family. It no more detracts from Sheridan's genius to point out resemblances to Wycherley or Congreve than it would smirch the reputation of a peer to bear a likeness to the founder of his family. And even if the resemblance is something more than the outcome of tradition, the comparative study of literature has shown that direct borrowing, so far from being impermissible, has given us some of its finest passages. It required but a few touches to transform an extract from a prose translation of Plutarch into the magnificent description of the barge of Cleopatra—as Shakespearean a passage as any in the plays. With regard to Sheridan as to Shakespeare, the only legitimate question is whether he assimilated what he borrowed, and in both cases

the answer is unhesitating. The plays of Sheridan are throughout essentially and characteristically the work of Sheridan. Even Mrs. Malaprop, whom he lifted almost bodily from his mother's unpublished play *A Journey to Bath* has become part and parcel of his work. His real originality lies in the completeness and individuality of his work without any reference to its sources or its predecessors ; and individuality in works of art, as in human beings is seen in the strength and clearness of the impressions they make on others. If an artist has welded his material into a complete organic whole a work of art.

—Balston : *Introduction to The Rivals.*

(18)

The main features of *The Rivals* are those of *She Stoops to Conquer*, breeziness and human nature. The play has life—a racy life of boisterous spirits. The brisk and bus'ling contrasts of characters stand in sharp relief, while the quick humour of telling situations fences, thrust on thrust, wit with the wit. It transports us to comedy-land where all goes as it pleases and all comes right in the end. Far less polished and premeditated than *The School for Scandal*, it is also much more sympathetic. *The School for Scandal* breathes the diplomacy of a drawing-room, *The Rivals* is like a game of blindman's-bluff in the open air. And however unnatural this or that phrase may sound in the mouths which repeat it (though on the stage motive alone can be called "unnatural"), it is not unreal. The persons move and breathe and have their being. The testy old father is a type ancient as those of Plautus and Terence, but Sir Anthony Absolute, whose tyranny keeps pace with his gouts and whose obstinacy contradicts itself, is a distinct species alive with the lineaments of Sheridan's father. The young scapegrace, again, is no new character, but his impudent air of modesty and his lover's devotion, make him a sort of innocent Charles Surface. If the servants ape their masters and speak of Jupiter, Sheridan could supply his own excuse : "Heaven forbid they should not in a free country", he says in *The Critic*. Sir, I am not for making slavish distinctions and giving all the fine language to the upper sort of people" ; and

long before Sheridan, Congreve had noticed that the servant's hall affected smartness and the language above stairs. Bob Acres, however, is wholly original, though his fancy in oaths may derive from Congreve, whose Wittol in *The Old Bachelor* exclaims "Gads, daggers, belts, blades and scabbards!" a rather suspicious coincidence which the plagiary-hunters have missed. We know and see him; there can be no better test than that. So, too, with Sir Lucius, whose "can a man commit a more heinous offence against another than to fall in love with the same woman?" sums up all his gay bravado. Even Lydia, the gushing school-girl, is individualised by her passion for elopement. Faulkland and Julia, as we know from the love-letters and love-incidents preceding Sheridan's marriage, are true transcripts from himself and Miss Llnley.

—Walter Sichel: *Sheridan, Vol. I.*

[illegible] Even Lydia, the gushing school-girl, is individualised; let her [illegible] craves for elopement. Faulkland and Julia, as we know from the love-letters and love-sufferings preceding Sheridan's marriage, are true transcripts from himself and Miss Linley.

— Walter Sichel: *Sheridan*, Vol. I.

SHERIDAN'S PREFACE

A PREFACE to a play seems generally to be considered as a kind of closet-prologue, in which—if his piece has been successful—the author solicits that indulgence from the reader which he had before experienced from the audience : but as the scope and immediate object of a play is to please a mixed assembly in *representation* (whose judgment in the theatre at least is decisive), its degree of reputation is usually as determined by the public, before it can be prepared for the cooler tribunal of the study. Thus any further solicitude on the part of the writer becomes unnecessary at least, if not an intrusion : and if the piece has been condemned in the performance, I fear an address to the closet, like an appeal to posterity, is constantly regarded as the procrastination of a suit, from a consciousness of the weakness of the cause. From these considerations, the following comedy would certainly have been submitted to the reader, without any further introduction than what it had in the representation, but that its success has probably been founded on a circumstance which the author is informed has not before attended a theatrical trial, and which consequently ought not to pass unnoticed.

I need scarcely add, that the circumstance alluded to was the withdrawing of the piece, to remove those imperfections in the first representation wnich were too obvious to escape reprehension, and too numerous to admit of a hasty correction. There are few writers, I believe, who, even in the fullest consciousness of error, do not wish to palliate the faults which they acknowledge ; and, however trifling the performance, to second their confession of its deficiencies

by whatever plea seems least disgraceful to their ability. In the present instance, it cannot be said to amount either to candour or modesty in me, to acknowledge an extreme inexperience and want of judgment on matters, in which, without guidance from practice, or spur from success, a young man should scarcely boast of being an adept. If it be said that under such disadvantages no one should attempt to write a play, I must beg leave to dissent from the position, while the first point of experience that I have gained on the subject is, a knowledge of the candour and judgment with which an impartial public distinguishes between the errors of inexperience and incapacity, and the indulgence which it shows even to a disposition to remedy the defects of either.

It were unnecessary to enter into any further extenuation of what was thought exceptionable in this play, but that it has been said, that the managers should have prevented some of the defects before its appearance to the public—and in particular the uncommon length of the piece as represented the first night It were an ill return for the most liberal and gentlemanly conduct on their side, to suffer any censure to rest where none was deserved. Hurry in writing has long been exploded as an excuse for an author ;—however, in the dramatic line, it may happen, that both an author and a manager may wish to fill chasm in the entertainment of the public with a hastiness not altogether culpable. The season was advanced when I first put the play into Mr. Harris's hands : it was at that time at least double the length of any acting comedy.I profited by his judgment and experience in the curtailing of it—till, I believe, his feeling for the vanity of a young author got the better of his desire for correctness, and he left many excrescences remaining, because he had assisted in pruning so many more. Hence, though I was not uniformed that the acts were still too long, I flattered myself that, after the first trial, I might with safer judgment proceed to remove what should appear to have been most dissatisfactory. Many other errors there were, which might in part have arisen from my being by no means conversant with plays in general, either in reading or at the theatre. Yet I own that, in one respect, I did not regret my ignorance : for as my first wish in attempting a play

was to avoid every appearance of plagiary, I thought I should stand a better chance of effecting this from being in a walk which I had not frequented, and where, consequently, the progress of invention was less likely to be interrupted by starts of recollection : for on subjects on which the mind has been much informed, invention is slow of exerting itself. Faded ideas float in the fancy like half-forgotten dreams ; and the imagination in its fullest enjoyments becomes suspicious of its offspring, and doubts whether it has created or adopted.

With regard to some particular passages which on the first night's representation seemed generally disliked, I confess that I felt any emotion of surprise at the disapprobation, it was not that they were disapproved of, but that I have not before perceived that they deserved it. As some part of the attack on the piece was begun too early to pass for the sentence of *judgment*, which is ever tardy in condemning, it has been suggested to me that much of the disapprobation must have arisen from virulence of malice, rather than severity of criticism : but as I was more apprehensive of there being just ground to excite the latter than conscious of having deserved the former, I continue not to believe that probable which I am sure must have been unprovoked. However, if it was so, and I could even mark the quarter from whence it came, it would be ungenerous to retort ; for no passion suffers more than malice from disappointment. For my own part, I see no reason why the author of a play should not regard a first night's audience as a candid and judicious friend attending, in behalf of the public, at his last rehearsal. If he can dispense with flattery, he is sure at least of sincerity, and even though the annotation be rude, he may rely upon the justness of the comment. Considered in this light, that audience, whose *fiat* is essential to the poet's claim, whether his object be fame or profit he surely has a right to expect some deference to its opinion, from principles of politeness at least, if not from gratitude.

As for the little puny critics, who scatter their peevish strictures in private circles, and scribble at every author who has the eminence of being unconnected with them, as they are usually spleen-swollen from a vain idea of increasing their consequence, there will always

be found a petulance and illiberality in their remarks, which should place them as far beneath the notice of a gentleman as their original dulness had sunk them from the level of the most unsuccessful author.

It is not without pleasure that I catch at an opoprtunity of justifying myself from the charge of intending any national reflection on the character of Sir Lucius O'Trigger. If any gentlemen opposed the piece from that idea, I thank them sincerely for their opposition; and if the condemnation of this comedy (however misconceived the provocation) could have added one spark to the decaying flame of national attachment to the country supposed to be reflected on, I should have been happy in its fate, and might with truth have boasted that it had done more real service in its failure than the successful morality of a thousand stage-novels will ever effect.

It is usual, I believe, to thank the performers in a new play for the exertion of their several abilities. But where (as in this instance) their merit has been so striking and uncontroverted as to call for the warmest and truest applause from a number of judicious audiences, the poet's after-praise comes like the feeble acclamation of a child to close the shouts of a multitude. The conduct, however, of the principals in a theatre cannot be so apparent to the public. I think it therefore but justice to declare, that from this theatre (the only one I can speak of from experience) those writers who wish to try the dramatic line will meet with that candour and liberal attention which are generally allowed to be better calculated to lead genius into excellence than either the precepts of judgment or the guidance of experience.

AUTHOR

PROLOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

SPOKEN BY MR. WOODWARD AND MR. QUICK

Enter SERJEANT AT LAW, *and* ATTORNEY, *following, and giving a paper.*

Serj. What's here!—a vile cramp hand! I cannot see
Without my spectacles.—*Att.* He means his fee.
Navy, Mr. Serjeant, good sir, try again. [*Gives money.*
Serj. The scrawl improves! [*More.*] Oh come, 'tis pretty plain.
Hey! how's this? Dibble!—sure it cannot be!
A poet's brief! a poet and a fee!
Att. Yes, sir! though *you* without reward, I know,
Would gladly plead the Muse's cause.—*Serj.* So!—So!
Att. And if the fee offends, your wrath should fall
On me.—*Serj.* Dear Dibble, no offence at all.
Att. Some sons of Phœbus in the courts we meet.
Serj. And fifty sons of Phœbus in the Fleet!
Att. Nor pleads he worse, who with a decent sprig
Of bays adorns his legal waste of wig.
Serj. Full-bottomed heroes thus, on signs, unfurl
A leaf of laurel in a grove of curl!
Yet tell your client, that, in adverse days,
This wig is warmer than a bush of bays.
Att. Do you, then, sir, my client's place supply,

Profuse of robe: and prodigal of tie—
Do you, with all those blushing powers of face,
And wonted bashful hesitating grace,
Rise in the court, and flourish on the case. [*Exit.*

Serj. For practice then suppose—this brief will show it,—
Me, Serjeant Woodward,—counsel for the poet.
Used to the ground, I know 'tis hard to deal
With this dread *court*, from whence there's no *appeal*;
No *tricking* here, to blunt the edge of *law*,
Or, damn'd in *equity*, escape by *flaw*:
But *judgment* given, *your sentence* must remain;
No *writ of error* lies—to *Drury-lane*!

Yet when so kind you seem, 'tis past dispute
We gain some favour, if not *costs of suit*.
No spleen is here! I see no hoarded fury;
—I think I never faced a milder jury!
Sad else our plight! where frowns are transportation,
A hiss the gallows, and a groan damnation!
But such the public candour, without fear
My client waves all *right of challenge* here.
No newsman from *our* session is dismiss'd,
Nor wit nor critic *we* scratch off the list;
His faults can never hurt another's case,
His crime, at worst, *a bad attempt* to please:
Thus, all respecting, he appeals to all,
And by the general voice will *stand* or *fall*.

The play being withdrawn after the first night's representation, upon its second appearance the lines from "Hey! how's this?" to "no offence at all," were omitted, and the following inserted:

"How's this! the poet's brief *again!* Oh ho!
Cast, I suppose?—*Att.* Oh pardon me—No—No—
We found the court, o'erlooking stricter laws,
Indulgent to the *merits* of the cause;
By *judges* mild, unused to harsh denial,

A rule was granted for *another trial*.
Serj. Then hark'ee, Dibble, did you *mend* your *pleadings* ?
Errors, no few ; we've *found* in our *proceedings*.
Att. Come, courage, sir, we did *amend* our *plea*,
Hence your *new brief*, and this *refreshing fee*."

PROLOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

SPOKEN ON THE TENTH NIGHT BY MRS. BULKLEY

GRANTED our cause, our suit and trial o'er,
The worthy Serjeant need appear no more :
In pleasing I a different client choose,
He served the Poet,—I would serve the Muse :
Like him, i'll try to merit your applause,
A female counsel in a female's cause

Look on this form,[1]—where Humour, quaint and sly,
Dimples the cheek, and points the beaming eye ;
Where gay Invention seems to boast it wiles
In amorous hint, and half-triumphant smiles ;
While her light mask or covers Satire's strokes,
Or hides the conscious blush her wit provokes.
—Look on her well—does she seem form'd to teach ?
Should you *expect* to hear this lady preach ?
Is gray experience suited to her youth ?
Do solemn sentiments become that mouth ?
Bid her be grave, those lips should rebel prove
To every theme that slanders mirth or love.

Yet thus adorn'd with every graceful art
To charm the fancy and yet reach the heart—
Must we displace her ? And instead advance
The goddess of the woeful countenance—

1 Pointing to the figure of Comedy.

The sentimental Muse !—Her emblems view,
The Pilgrim's Progress, and a sprig of rue !
View her—too chaste to look like flesh and blood—
Primly portrayed on emblematic wood !
There fix'd in usurpation should she stand,
She'll snatch the dagger from her sister's hand :
And having made her vot'ries *weep a flood*,
Good heaven ! she'll end her comedies in blood—
Bid Harry Woodward break poor Dunstal's crown !
Imprison Quick, and knock Ned Shuter down ;
While sad Barsanti, weeping o'er the scene,
Shall stab herself—or poison Mrs. Green.—

Such dire encroachments to prevent in time,
Demands the critic's voice—the poet's rhyme.
Can our light scenes add strength to holy laws !
Such puny patronage but hurt the cause :
Fair Virtue scorns our feeble aid to ask ;
And moral Truth disdains the trickster's mask.
For here their fav'rite stands,[1] whose brow, severe
And sad, claims Youth's respect, and Pity's tear ;
Who, when oppress'd by foes her worth creates,
Can point a poniard at the Guilt she hates.

1 pointing to Tragedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE IN 1775.

SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE - -	*Mr. Shuter.*
CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE - - -	*Mr. Woodward.*
FAULKLAND - - - -	*Mr. Lewis.*
ACRES - - - - -	*Mr. Quick.*
SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER - -	*Mr. Lee.*[1]
FAG - - - - -	*Mr. Lee Lewes.*
DAVID - - - - -	*Mr. Dunstal.*
COACHMAN - - - -	*Mr. Fearon.*
MRS. MALAPROP - - -	*Mrs. Green.*
LYDIA LANGUISH - - -	*Miss Barsanti.*
JULIA - - - - -	*Mrs. Bulkley.*
LUCY - - - - -	*Mrs. Lessingham.*

Maid, Boy, Servants, etc.

Scene—Bath

Time of Action—Five Hours.

1 Afterwards by Mr. Clinch.

ACT I

SCENE I.—*A Street in Bath*

COACHMAN *crosses the stage.—Enter* FAG, *looking after him*

Fag. What! Thomas!—Sure 'tis he?—What! Thomas! Thomas!

Coach. Hey!—Odds life! Mr. Fag!—give us your hand, my old fellow-servant.

Fag. Excuse my glove, Thomas:—I'm devilish glad to see you, my lad: why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty!—but who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath?

Coach. Sure, master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs. Kate, and the postillion, be all come.

Fag. Indeed!

Coach. Ay! master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit:—so he'd a mind to gi't the slip, and whip! we were all off at an hour's warning.

Fag. Ay, ay! hasty in everything, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute!

Coach. But tell us, Mr. Fag, how does young master? Odd! Sir Anthony will stare to see the captain here!

Fag. I do not serve Captain Absolute now.—

Coach. Why, sure!

Fag. At present I am employed by Ensign Beverley.

Coach. I doubt, Mr. Fag, you ha'n't changed for the better.

Fag. I have not changed, Thomas.

Coach. No! why, didn't you say you had left young master?

Fag. No.——Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle you no further:—briefly then—Captain Absolute and Ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

Coach. The devil they are!

Fag. So it is indeed, Thomas; and the *ensign* half of my master being on guard at present—the *captain* has nothing to do with me.

Coach. So, so!—what, this is some freak, I warrant!—Do tell us, Mr. Fag, the meaning o't—you know I ha' trusted you.

Fag. You'll be secret, Thomas?

Coach. As a coach-horse.

Fag. Why then, the cause of all this is—LOVE,—Love, Thomas, who (as you may get read to you) has been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter.

Coach. Ay, ay;—I guess'd there was a lady in the case:—but pray, why does your master pass only for *ensign*?—now if he had shamm'd *general* indeed—

Fag. Ah! Thomas, there lies the mystery o' the matter. Hark'ee Thomas, my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste: a lady who likes him better as a *half-pay ensign* than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a year.

Coach. That is an odd taste indeed!—but has she got the stuff, Mr. Fag? is she rich, hey?

Fag. Rich!—why, I believe she owns half the stocks! Zounds! Thomas, she could pay the national debt as easily as I could my washerwoman!—She has a lap-dog that eats out of gold,—she feeds her parrot with small

pearls,—and all her thread-papers are made of banknotes !

Coach. Bravo, faith !—Odd ! I warrant she has a set of thousands at least :—but does she draw kindly with the captain ?

Fag. As fond as pigeons.

Coach. May one hear her name ?

Fag. Miss Lydia Languish.—But there is an old tough aunt in the way ;—though, by the bye, she has never seen my master—for we got acquainted with Miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

Coach. Well—I wish they were once harnessed together in matrimony.—But pray, Mr. Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath ?—I ha' heard a deal of it—here's a mort of merry-making, hey ?

Fag. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well—'tis a good lounge; in the morning we go to the pump-room (though neither my master nor I drink the waters) ; after breakfast we saunter on the parades, or play a game at billiards ; at night we dance ; but damn the place, I'm tired of it : their regular hours stupefy me—not a fiddle nor a card after eleven !—however, Mr. Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up a little in private parties ;—I'll introduce you there, Thomas—you'll like him much.

Cocah. Sure, I know Mr. Du Peigne—you know his master is to marry Madam Julia.

Fag. I had forgot.—But, Thomas, you must polish a little—indeed you must—Here now—this wig !—what the devil do you do with a wig, Thomas ?—none of the London whips of any degree of *ton* wear wigs now.

Coach. More's the pity ! more's the pity. I say—Odds life ! when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next :—Odd rabbit it ! when the fashion had got foot on the Bar, I guess'd 'twould mount to the Box !—but 'tis all out

of character, believe me, Mr. Fag; and look'ee, I'll never gi' up mine—the lawyers and doctors may do as they will.

Fag. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

Coach. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of the professions ben't all of a mind—for in our village now, thoff Jack Gauge the exciseman has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick the farrier swears he'll never forsake his bob, tho' all the college should appear with their own heads!

Fag. Indeed! well said, Dick! but hold—mark! mark! Thomas.

Coach. Zooks! 'tis the captain—Is that the lady with him?

Fag. No! no! that is Madam Lucy—my master's mistress's maid. They lodge at the house—but I must after him to tell him the news.

Coach. Odd! he's giving her money!—well, Mr. Fag——

Fag. Good-bye, Thomas. I have an appointment in Gyde's Porch this evening at eight; meet me there, and we'll make a little party. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A Dressing-room in* MRS. MALAPROP'S *Lodgings*

LYDIA, *sitting on a sofa, with a book in her hand,* LUCY, *as just returned from a message.*

Lucy. Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it: I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath I ha'n't been at.

Lydia. And could not you get "The Reward of Constancy"?

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor "The Fatal Connexion"?

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor "The Mistakes of the Heart"?

Lucy. Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr. Bull said Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away.

Lydia. Heigh-ho!—Did you inquire for "The Delicate Distress"?

Lucy.——Or "The Memoirs of Lady Woodford"? Yes, indeed, ma'am. I asked everywhere for it; and I might have brought it from Mr. Frederick's, but Lady Slattern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's-ear'd it, it wa'n't fit for a Christian to read.

Lydia. Heigh-ho!—Yes, always know when Lady Slattern has been before me. She has a most observing thumb; and, I believe, cherishes her nails for the convenience of making marginal notes.—Well, child, what have you brought me?

Lucy. Oh! here, ma'am.

[*Taking books from under her cloak, and from her pockets.*

This is "The Gordian Knot,"—and this "Peregrine Pickle." Here are "The Tears of Sensibility," and

"Humphrey Clinker," This is "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, written by herself," and here the second volume of "The Sentimental Journey."

Lydia. Heigh-ho !—What are those books by the glass ?

Lucy. The great one is only "The Whole Duty of Man," where I press a few blonds, ma'am ?

Lydia. Very well—give me the *sal volatile.*

Lucy. Is it in a blue cover, ma'am ?

Lydia. My smelling-bottle, you simpleton !

Luck. Oh, the drops !—here, ma'am ?

Lydia. Hold !—here's some one coming—quick, see who it is—— [*Exit* LUCY.

Surely I heard my cousin Julia's voice !

[*Re-enter* LUCY.

Lucy. Lud ! ma'am, here is Miss Melville.

Lydia. Is it possible !——

Enter JULIA

Lydia. My dearest Julia, how delighted am I ! (*Embrace*) How unexpected was this happiness !

Julia. True, Lydia—and our pleasure is the greater:—but what has been the matter ?—you were denied to me at first !

Lydia. Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you !—but first inform me what has conjured you to Bath ?—Is Sir Anthony here ?

Julia. He is—we are arrived within this hour—and I suppose he will be here to wait on Mrs. Malaprop as soon as he is dressed.

Lydia. Then before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress !—I know your gentle nature will sympathise with me, though your prudence may

condemn me!—My letters have informed you of my whole connection with Beverley;—but I have lost him, Julia!—my aunt has discovered our intercourse by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since!—Yet, would you believe it? she has fallen absolutely in love with a tall Irish baronet she met one night since we have been here at Lady Macshuffle's rout.

Julia. You jest, Lydia!

Lydia. No, upon my word—She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chooses to be known to him;—but it is a Delia or a Celia, I assure you.

Julia. Then, surely, she is now more indulgent to her niece.

Lydia. Quite the contrary. Since she has discovered her own frailty, she is become more suspicious of mine. Then I must inform you of another plague!—That odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day; so that I protest I shall be teased out of all spirits!

Julia. Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best—Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs. Malaprop.

Lydia. But you have not heard the worst. Unfortunately I had quarrelled with my poor Beverley, just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since, to make it up.

Julia. What was his offence?

Lydia. Nothing at all!—But, I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel—And, somehow, I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity,—So, last Thursday, I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself that Beverley was at that time paying his addresses to another woman. I signed it "your friend unknown," showed it to Beverley, charged him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vowed I'd never see him more.

Julia. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since?

Lydia. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out. I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever.

Julia. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia, you tell me he is but an ensign, and you have thirty thousand pounds!

Lydia. But you know I lose most of my fortune if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determined to do, ever since I knew the penalty. Nor could I love the man who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

Julia. Nay, this is caprice!

Lydia. What, does Julia tax me with caprice!—I thought her lover Faulkland had injured her to it.

Julia. I do not love even *his* faults.

Lydia. But apropos—you have sent to him, I suppose?

Juila. Not yet, upon my word—nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath. Sir Authony's resolution was so sudden, I could not inform him of it.

Lydia. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress (though under the protection of Sir Authony), yet have you, for this long year, been a slave to the caprice, the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the right of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

Julia. Nay, you are wrong entirely. We were contracted before my father's death. That, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish. He is too generous to trifle on such a point.—And for his character, you wrong

him there too. No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness. Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover—but being unhackneyed in the passion, his affection is ardent and sincere; and as it engroses his whole soul, he expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his. Yet, though his pride calls for this full return, his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him which would entitle him to it; and not feeling why he should be loved to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not loved enough:—This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours! but I have learned to think myself his debtor, for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

Lydia. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him. But tell me candidly, Julia, had he never saved your life, do you think you should have been attached to him as you are?—Believe me, the rude blast that overset your boat was a prosperous gale of love to him.

Julia. Gratitude may have strenghened my attachment to Mr. Faulkland, but I loved him before he had preserved me; yet surely that alone were an obligation sufficient—

Lydia. Obligation!——Why, a water-spaniel would have done as much!—Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man because he could swim!

Julia. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

Lydia. Nay, I do but jest.—What's here?

Enter LUCY *in a hurry*

Lucy. Oh, ma'am, here is Sir Anthony Absolute just come home with your aunt.

Lydia. They'll not come here—Lucy, do you watch.
[*Exit* LUCY.

Julia. Yet I must go. Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to show me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs. Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chooses, with her select words so ingeniously *misapplied* without being *mispronounced.*

Re-enter LUCY

Lucy. O Lud! ma'am, they are both coming upstairs.

Lydia. Well, I'll not detain you, coz.—Adieu, my dear Julia, I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland.—There—through my room you'll find another staircase.

Julia. Adieu!—(*Embrace.*) [*Exit* JULIA

Lydia. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books. Quick, quick—Fling "Peregrine Pickle" under the toilet—throw "Roderick Random" into the closet—put "The Innocent Adultery" into "The Whole Duty of Man"—thrust "Lord Aimworth" under the sofa—cram "Ovid" behind the bolster—there—put "The Man of Feeling" into your pocket—so, so—now lay "Mrs. Chapone" in sight, and leave "Fordyce's Sermons" open on the table.

Lucy. Oh, burn it, ma'am, the hair-dresser has torn away as far as Proper Pride.

Lydia. Never mind—open at Sobriety.—Fling me "Lord Chesterfield's Letters."—Now for 'em. 181

Enter MRS. MALAPROP *and* SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

Mrs. Mal. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton, who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lydia. Madam, I thought you once——

Mrs. Mal. You thought, Miss! I don't know any

business you have to think at all—though does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow—to obliterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

Lydia. Ah, madam! our memories are independent for our wills. It is not so easy to forget.

Mrs. Mal. But I say it is, Miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to *forget*, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much to forget your poor dear uncle, as if he had never existed—and I thought it my duty so to do ; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Sir Anth. Why, sure, she won't pretend to remember what she's order'd not !—ay, this comes of her reading!

Lydia. What crime, madam, have I committed, to be treated thus?

Mrs. Mal. Now don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter ; you know I have proof controvertible of it.—But tell me, will you promise to do so as you're bid? Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing?

Lydia. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs. Mal. What business have you, Miss, with *preference* and *aversion*? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little *aversion*. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a black-a-moor—and yet, Miss, you are sensible what a wife I made !—and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed !—But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

Lydia. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that

promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs. Mal. Take yourself to your room.—You are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humours.

Lydia. Willingly, ma'am—I cannot change for the worse. [*Exit* LYDIA.

Mrs. Mal. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am,—all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet! 231

Mrs. Mal. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library!—She had a book in each hand—they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers!—From that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress!

Mrs. Mal. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge! It blossoms through the year!—And depend on it, Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last. 244

Mrs. Mal. Fie, fie, Sir Anthony! you surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation, now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs. Mal. Observe me, Sir Anthony.—I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or Algebra, or Simony, or Fluxions, or Paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning—

neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments:—But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts;—and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries;—but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spell, and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know;—and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess, that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question. But, Mrs. Malaprop, to the more important point in debate,—you say, you have no objection to my proposal.

Mrs. Mal. None, I assure you. I am under no positive engagement with Mr. Acres, and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is
at present with his regiment. 281

Mrs. Mal. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side.

Sir Anth. Objection!—Let him object if he dare!—No, no, Mrs. Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple—in their younger days, 'twas "Jack, do this";—if he demurred, I knocked him down—and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs. Mal. Ay, and the properest way, o'my conscience!—nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr. Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations;—and I hope you will represent *her* to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently.—Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl;—take my advice—keep a tight hand: if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about.

[*Exit* Sir ANTH.

Mrs. Mal. Well, at any rate I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. She has somehow discovered my partiality for Sir Lucius O'Trigger—sure, Lucy can't have betrayed me!—No, the girl is such a simpleton, I should have made her confess it.—Lucy!—Lucy!—(*Calls*). Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

Enter LUCY

Lucy. Did you call me, ma'am?

Mrs. Mal. Yes, girl.—Did you see Sir Lucius while you were out?

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs. Mal. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned——

Lucy. O Gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out.

Mrs. Mal. Well, don't let your simplicity be imposed on.

Lucy. No, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you

another letter to Sir Lucius; but mind, Lucy—if ever you betray what you are entrusted with (unless it be other people's secrets to me), you forfeit my malevolence for ever; and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locality. [*Exit* Mrs. MAL.

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha!—So, my dear *simplicity*, let me give you a little respite—(*altering her manner*)—let girls in my station be as fond as they please of appearing expert, and knowing in their trusts; commend me to a mask of *silliness*, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it!—Let me see to what account have I turned my *simplicity* lately—(*looks at a paper*). For *abetting Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an ensign!—in money, sundry times, twelve pound twelve; gowns five; hats, ruffles, caps, etc., etc., numberless!—From the said ensign, within this last month, six guineas and a half.*—About a quarter's pay!—Item, *from Mrs. Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her*—when I found matters were likely to be discovered—*two guineas, and a black padusoy.*—Item, *from Mr. Acres, for carrying divers letters*—which I never delivered—*two guineas, and a pair of buckles.*—Item, *from Sir Lucius O'Trigger, three crowns, two gold pocket-pieces, and a silver snuff-box!*—Well done, *simplicity!*—yet I was forced to make my Hibernian believe, that he was corresponding, not with the *aunt*, but with the *niece*: for though not over-rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortunes. [*Exit.*

ACT II

SCENE I.—Captain ABSOLUTE'S *Lodgings*

Captain ABSOLUTE *and* FAG

Fag. Sir, while I was there Sir Anthony came in : I told him, you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

Abs. And what did he say, on hearing I was at Bath ?

Fag. Sir, in my life I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished ! He started back two or three paces, rapt out a dozen interjectural oaths, and asked, what the devil had brought you here ?

Abs. Well, sir, and what did you say ?

Fag. Oh, I lied, sir—I forget the precise lie ; but you may depend on't, he got no truth from me. Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I should be glad to fix what *has* brought us to Bath ; in order that we may lie a little consistently.—Sir Anthony's servants were curious, sir, very curious indeed.

Abs. You have said nothing to them—— ?

Fag. Oh, not a word, sir,—not a word. Mr. Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)——

Abs. 'Sdeath !—you rascal ! you have not trusted him !

Fag. Oh, *no*, sir—no—no—not a syllable, upon my veracity !—He was, indeed, a little inquisitive ; but I was sly, sir—devilish sly ! master (said I), honest Thomas

(you know, sir, one says *honest* to one's inferiors), is come to Bath to *recruit*—Yes, sir, I said to *recruit*—and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else.

Abs. Well, *recruit* will do—let it be so.

Fag. Oh, sir, recruit will do surprisingly—idneed, to give the thing on air, I told Thomas, that your honour had already enlisted five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard-markers.

Abs. You blockhead, never say more than is necessary.

Fag. I beg pardon, sir—I beg pardon,—But, with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it. Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge indorsements as well as the bill.

Abs. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit, by offering too much security.—Is Mr. Faulkland returned?

Fag. He is above, sir, changing his dress.

Abs. Can you tell whether he has been informed of Sir Anthony's and Miss Melville arrival?

Fag. I fancy not, sir; he has seen no one since he came in but his gentleman, who was with him at Bristol. —I think, sir, I hear Mr. Faulkland coming down——.

Abs. Go, tell him, I am here.

Fag. Yes, sir—(*going*)—I beg pardon, sir, but should Sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember, that we are *recruiting*, if you please.

Abs. Well, well.

Fag. And in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I should esteem it as an obligation; for though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be found out. [*Exit.*

Abs. Now for my whimsical friend—if he does not

know that his mistress is here, I'll tease him a little before I tell him——

Enter FAULKLAND

Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again; you are punctual in your return.

Faulk. Yes; I had nothing to detain me, when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? How stand matters between you and Lydia?

Abs. Faith, much as they were; I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

Faulk. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once?

Abs. What, and lose two-thirds of her fortune? You forget that, my friend.—No, I could have brought her to that long ago.

Faulk. Nay then, you trifle too long—if you are sure of *her*, propose to the aunt *in your own character*, and write to Sir Anthony for his consent.

Abs. Softly, softly; for though I am convinced my little Lydia would elope with me as Ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune on my side: no, no; I must prepare her gradually for the discovery, and make myself necessary to her, before I risk it.—Well, but Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the Hotel?

Faulk. Indeed I cannot: I am not in spirits to be of such a party.

Abs. By Heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover!—Do love like a man.

Faulk. I own I am unfit for company.

Abs. Am not I a lover ; ay, and a romantic one too ? Yet do I carry everywhere with me such a confounded farrago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes, and all the flimsy furniture of a country miss's brain ?

Faulk. Ah ! Jack, your heart and soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on only one object. You throw for a large stack, but losing, you could stake, and throw again :—but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed, were to be strip of all.

Abs. But, for Heavens' sake ! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present ?

Faulk. What grounds for apprehension, did you say ? Heavens ! are there not a thousand ! I fear for her spirits —her health—her life.—My absence may fret her ; her anxiety for my return, her fears for me, may oppress her gentle temper. And for her, does not every hour bring me cause to be alarmed ? If it rains, some shower may even then have chilled her delicate frame ! If the wind be keen, some rude blast may have affected her ! The heat of noon, the dews of the evening, may endanger the life of hers, for whom only I value mine. Oh, Jack ! when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension !

Abs. Ay, but we may choose whether we will take the hint or not.—So then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia were well and in spirits, you would be entirely content.

Faulk. I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

Abs. Then to cure your anxiety at once—Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath.

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

Abs. She is arrived here with my father within this hour.

Faulk. Can you be serious ?

Abs. I thought you knew Sir Anthony better than to be surprised at sudden whim of this kind.—Seriously then, it is as tell you—upon my honour.

Faulk. My dear friend !—Hello, Du Peigne ! my hat —my dear Jack—now nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.

Enter FAG

Fag. Sir, Mr. Acres, just arrived, is below.

Abs. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of Sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, show the gentleman up. [*Exit* FAG.

Faulk. What, is he much acquainted in the family ?

Abs. Oh, very intimate : I insist on your not going : besides, his character will divert you.

Faulk. Well, I should like to ask him a few questions.

Abs. He is likewise a rival of mine—that is, of my *other self's*, for he does not think his friend Captain Absolute ever saw the lady in question ; and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of *one Beverley*, a concealed skulking rival, who——

Faulk. Hush !—He's here.

Enter ACRES

Acres. Hah ! my dear friend, noble Captain, and honest Jack, how dost thou ? just arrived, faith, as you see.—Sir, your humble servant.—Warm work on the roads, Jack—Odds whips and wheels ! I've travelled like a comet, with a tail of dust all the way as long as the Mall.

Abs. Ah ! Bob, you are indeed an eccentric planet, but we know your attraction hither—Give me leave to introduce Mr. Faulkland to you ; Mr. Faulkland, Mr. Acres.

Acres. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you : sir, I solicit your connexions.—Hey, Jack—what, this is Mr. Faulkland, who——

Abs. Ay, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr. Faulkland.

Acres. Odd so ! she and your father can be but just arrived before me—I suppose you have seen them. Ah ! Mr. Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man.

Faulk. I have not seen Miss Melville yet, sir ;—I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire ?

Acres. Never knew her better in my life, sir,—never better. Odds blushes and blooms ! she has been as healthy as the German Spa.

Faulk. Indeed !—I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

Acres. False, false, sir—only said to vex you : quite the reverse, I assure you.

Faulk. There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me ; I had almost fretted myself ill.

Abs. Now, are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick ?

Faulk. No, no, you misunderstand me :—yet surely a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love.—Now confess—isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health ?

Abs. Oh, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence, to be sure !

Acres. Good apartments, Jack.

Faulk. Well, sir, but you was saying that Miss Melville

has been so *exceedingly* well—what then, she has been merry and gay, I suppose ?—Always in spirits—hey ?

Acres. Merry, odds crickets ! she has been the belle and spirit of the company wherever she has been— so lively and entertaining ! so full of wit and humour !

Faulk. There, Jack, there.—Oh, by my soul ! there is an innate levity in women, that nothing can overcome.—What ! happy, and I away !

Abs. Have done :—How foolish this is ! Just now you were only apprehensive for your mistress's *spirits.*

Faulk. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the compay ?

Abs. No, indeed, you have not.

Faulk. Have I been lively and entertaining ?

Abs. Oh, upon my word, I acquit you.

Faulk. Have I been full of wit and humour ?

Abs. No, faith, to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid indeed.

Acres. What's the matter with the gentleman ?

Abs. He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy—that's all —hey, Faulkand ?

Faulk. Oh ! I am rejoiced to hear it—yes, yes she has a *happy* disposition !

Acres. That she has indeed—then she is so accomplished—so sweet a voice—so expert at her harpsichord —such a mistress of flat and sharp, squallante, rumblante, and quiverante !—there was this time month—Odds minnums and crotchets ! how she did chirrup at Mrs. Piano's concert !

Faulk. There again, what say you to this ? You see she has been all mirth and song—not a thought of me !

Abs. Pho ! man, is not music the food of love ?

Faulk. Well, well, it may be so.—Pray, Mr.——. what's his damn'd name !—Do you remember what songs Miss Melville sang ?

Acres. Not I indeed.—

Abs. Stay now, they were some pretty melancholy purling-stream airs, I warrant ; perhaps you may recollect ;—did she sing, "When absent from my soul's delight" ?

Acres. No, that wa'n't it.

Abs. Or, "Go, gentle gales ?"—"Go, gentle gales !" —(*Sings.*)

Acres. Oh, no ! nothing like it.—Odds ! now I recollect one of them—"My heart's my own, my will is free."—(*Sings.*)

Faulk. Fool, fool that I am ! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler ! 'Sdeath ! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle ! to soothe her light heart with catches and glee !—What can you say to this, sir ?

Abs. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, *sir.*

Faulk. Nay, nay, nay,—I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no, I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad on sick—yet surely a sympathetic heart would have shown itself even in the choice of a song—she might have been temperately healthy, and somehow, plaintively gay ;—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not !

Acres. What does the gentleman say about dancing ?

Abs. He says the lady we speak of dances as well as she sings.

Acres. Ay, truly, does she—there was at our last race ball——

Faulk. Hell and the devil ! There ! there—I told you so ! I told you so ! Oh ! she thrives in my absence !—

Dancing ! but her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine ;—I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness.—She has been all health ! spirit ! laugh ! song ! dance !—Oh ! damn'd, damn'd levity !

Abs. For Heavens' sake, Faulkland, don't expose yourself so.—Suppose she has danced, what then ?—does not the ceremony of society often oblige 261

Faulk. Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps as you say—for form sake—What, Mr. Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a *minute*—hey ?

Acres. Oh, I dare insure her for that—but what I was going to speak of was her *country-dancing* :—Odds swimmings ! she has such an air with her !

Faulk. Now disappointment on her ! defend this Absolute ; why don't you defend this ?—Country-dances ! jigs and reels ! am I to blame now ? A minute I could have forgiven—I should not have minded that—I say I should not have regarded a minute—but *country-dances* ! —Zounds ! had she made one in a *cotillion*—I believe I could have forgiven even that—but to be monkey-led for a night !—to run the gauntlet through a string of amorous palming puppies !—to show paces like a managed filly !—Oh, Jack, there never can be but *one* man in the world, whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a *country-dance* ; and even then, the rest of the couples should be her great-uncles and aunts !

Abs. Ay, to be sure !—grandfathers and grandmothers ! 282

Faulk. If there be but one vicious mind in the set, 'twill spread like a contagion—the action of their pulse bears to the lascivious movement of the jig—their quivering warm-breathed sighs impregnate the very air —the atmosphere becomes electrical to love, and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain !—

I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried—and that confounded looby has perceived it. (*Going.*)

Abs. Nay, but stay, Faulkland, and thank Mr. Acres for his good news.

Faulk. Damn his news! [*Exit* FAULKLAND.

Abs. Ha! ha! ha! poor Faulkland! five minutes since—"nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!"

Acres. The gentleman wa'n't angry at my praising his mistress, was he?

Abs. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

Acres. You don't say so? Ha! ha! jealous of me—that's a good joke.

Abs. There's nothing strange in that, Bob; let me tell you, that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of yours will do some mischief among the girls here.

Acres. Ah! you joke—ha! ha! mischief—ha! ha! but you know I am not my own property, my dear Lydia has forestalled me.—She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly—but odds frogs and tambours! I shan't take matters so here—now ancient madam has no voice in it—I'll make my old clothes know who's master—I shall straightway cashier the hunting-frock—and render my leather breeches incapable—My hair has been in training some time.

Abs. Indeed!

Acres. Ay—and thoff the side curls are a little restive, my hind-part takes it very kindly.

Abs. Oh, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely I propose so—then if I can find out this Ensign Beverley, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

Abs. Spoke like a man—but pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing——

Acres. Ha ! ha ! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, isn't it ?—I didn't invent it myself though ; but a commander in our militia—a great scholar, I assure you —says that there is no meaning in the common oaths, and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable ;—because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say, by Jove ! or by Bacchus ! or by Mars ! or by Venus ! or by Pallas ! according to the sentiment—so that to swear with propriety, says my little major, the "oath should be an echo to the sense" : and this we call the *oath referential*, or *sentimental swearing*—ha ! ha ! ha ! 'tis genteel, isn't it ?

Abs. Very genteel, and very new indeed—and I daresay will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

Acres. Ay, ay, the best terms will grow obsolete—Damns have had their day.

Enter FAG

Fag. Sir, there is a gentleman below, desires to see you —Shall I show him into the parlour ?

Abs. Ay—you may.

Acres. Well, I must be gone——

Abs. Stay ; who is it, Fag ?

Fag. Your father, sir.

Abs. You puppy, why didn't you show him up directly ? [*Exit* FAG.

Acres. You have business with Sir Anthony.—I expect a message from Mrs. Malaprop at my lodgings—I have sent also to my dear friend Sir Lucius O'Trigger.—Adieu, Jack ! we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

Abs. That I will with all my heart. [*Exit* ACRES. Now for a parental lecture—I hope he has heard nothing

of the business that has brought me here—I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

Enter Sir ANTHONY

Sir, I am delighted to see you here; and looking so well! your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I daresay, Jack—What, are you recruiting here, hey?

Abs. Yes, sir, I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it, for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business.—Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

Abs. Pardon me, sir, I never saw you look more strong and hearty; and pray frequently that you may continue so.

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard, with all my heart. Well then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty, I may continue to plague you a long time.—Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of you commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world. I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me—such generosity makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the sensations even of filial affection.

Sir Anth. I am glad you are so sensible of my attention—and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

Abs. Let my future life, sir, speak my gratitude; I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence.—Yet,

sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. Oh, that shall be as your wife chooses.

Abs. My wife, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, ay, settle between you—settle that between you.

Abs. A *wife*, sir, did you say?

Sir Anth. Ay, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

Abs. Not a word of her, sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I mustn't forget *her*, though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by a marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference.

Abs. Sir! sir!—you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

Abs. I was, sir,—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

Sir Anth. Why—what difference does that make? Odds life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the livestock on it, as it stands.

Abs. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.——Pray, sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Abs. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you *to object* to a lady you know nothing of.

Abs. Then, sir, I must tell you plainly, that my inclinations are fixed on another—my heart is engaged to an angel!

Sir Anth. Then pray let it send an excuse.—It is very sorry—but *business* prevents its waiting on her.

Abs. But my vows are pledged to her.

Sir Anth. Let her foreclose, Jack ; let her foreclose ; they are not worth redeeming ; besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange. I suppose ; so there can be no loss there.

Abs. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Hark'ee, Jack :—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool—quite cool ; but take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted ;—no one more easily led—when I have my own way ;—but don't put me in a frenzy.

Abs. Sir, I must repeat it—in this I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now damn me ! if ever I call you *Jack* again while I live !

Abs. Nay, sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, won't hear a word—not a word ! not one word ! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't, by——

Abs. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness ! to——

Sir Anth. Zounds ! sirrah ! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose : she shall have a hump on each shoulder ; she shall be as crooked as the Crescent ; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's Museum ; she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah !—yet I will make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty.

Abs. This is reason and moderation indeed !

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy ! no grinning, jackanapes !

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, sir, I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, sir! none of your violence; if you please—it won't do with me, I promise you.

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word.

Sir Anth. So you will fly out! Can't you be cool like me? What the devil good can passion do?—Passion is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate!—There you sneer again!—don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog! you play upon the meekness of my disposition! yet take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do everyting on earth that I choose, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you—If not, zound! don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest,—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and damn me! if ever I call you Jack again!

[*Exit* SIR ANTHONY.

ABSOLUTE *solus*

Abs. Mild, gentle, considerate father—I kiss your hands.—What a tender method of giving his opinion in these matters Sir Anthony has ! I dare not trust him with the truth.—I wonder what old wealthy hag it is that he wants to bestow on me !—yet he married himself for love ! and was in his youth a bold intriguer, and a gay companion !

Enter FAG

Fag. Assuredly, sir, your father is worth to a degree ; he comes downstair eight or ten steps at a time—muttering, growling, and thumping the banisters all the way : I and the cook's dog stand bowing at the door—rap ! he gives me a stroke on the head with his cane ; bids me carry that to my master ; then kicking the poor turnspit into the area, damns us all, for a puppy triumvirate !—Upon my credit, sir, were I in your place, and found my father in such very bad company, I should certainly drop his acquaintance.

Abs. Cease your impertinence, sir, at present.—Did you come in for nothing more !—Stand out of the way !

[*Pushes him aside, and exit.*

FAG *solus*

Fag. Oh sir ! Anthony trims my master : he is afraid to reply to his father—then vents his spleen on poor Fag !—when one is vexed by one person, to revenge one self on another, who happens to come in the way, is the vilest injustice ! Ah ! it shows the worst temper—the basest——

Enter ERRAND BOY

Boy. Mr. Fag ! Mr. Fag ! your master calls you.

Fag. Well ! you little dirty puppy, you need not bawl so !—The meanest disposition ! the——

Boy. Quick, quick, Mr. Fag.

Fag. Quick ! quick ! you impudent jackanapes ! am I to be commanded by you, too ? you little, impertinent, insolent, kitchen-bred——

[*Exit kicking and beating him.*

SCENE II.—*The North Parade*

Enter LUCY

Lucy. So—I shall have another rival to add to my mistress's list—Captain Absolute. However, I shall not enter his name till my purse has received notice in form. Poor Acres is dismissed !—Well, I have done him a last friendly office, in letting him know that Beverley was here before him.—Sir Lucius is generally more punctual. when he expects to hear from his *dear Dalia*, as he calls her : I wonder he's not here !—I have a little scruple of conscience from this deceit ; though I should not be paid so well, if my hero know that *Delia* was near fifty, and her own mistress.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER

Sir Luc. Hah ! my little ambassadress—upon my conscience, I have been looking for you ; I have been on the South Parade half hour.

Lucy. (*Speaking simply*.) O Gemini ! and I have been waiting for your worship here on the North.

Sir Luc. Faith !—may be, that was the reason we did not meet : it is very comical too, how you could go out and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap at the Parade Coffee-house, and I chose the *window* on purpose that I might not miss you.

Lucy. My stars ! Now I'd wager a sixpence I went by while you were asleep.

Sir Luc. Sure enough it must have been so—and I never dreamt it was so late, till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me ?

Lucy. Yes, but I have—I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

Sir Luc. Oh, faith ! I guessed you weren't come empty-handed—well—let me see what the dear creature says. 31

Lucy. There, Sir Lucius. (*Gives him a letter.*)

Sir Luc. (Reads) "*Sir—there is often a sudden incentive impulse in love, that has a greater induction than years of domestic combination : such was the commotion I felt at the first superfluous view of Sir Lucius O'Trigger.*"—Very pretty, upon my word.—"*Female punctuation forbids me to say more ; yet let me add, that it will give me joy infallible to find Sir Lucius worthy the last criterion of my affection.*

DELIA."

Upon my consicence ! Lucy, your lady is a great mistress of language. Faith, she's quite the queen of the dictionary !—for the devil a word dare refuse coming at her call—though one would think it was quite out of hearing. 44

Lucy. Ay, sir, a lady of her experience.

Sir Luc. Experience ? what, at seventeen ?

Lucy. Oh, true, sir—but then she reads so—my stars ! how she will read off hand !

Sir Luc. Faith, she must be very deep read to write this way—though she is rather an arbitrary writer too—for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their *habeas corpus* from any courts in Christendom. 53

Lucy. Ah ! Sir Lucius, if you were to hear how she talks of you !

Sir Luc. Oh, tell her I'll make her the best husband in the world, and Lady O'Trigger into the bargain!—But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent—and do everything fairly.

Lucy. Nay, Sir Lucius, I thought you wa'n't rich enough to be so nice!

Sir Luc. Upon my word, young woman, you have hit it:—I am so poor, that I can't afford to do dirty action.—If I did not want money, I'd steal your mistress and her fortune with a great deal of pleasure.—However, my pretty girl (*gives her money*), here's a little something to buy you a riband; and meet me in the evening, and I'll give you an answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss beforehand, to put you in mind. (*Kisses her.*)

Lucy. O Lud! Sir Lucius—I never seed such a gemman! My lady won't like you if you're so impudent.

Sir Luc. Faith she will, Lucy—that same—pho! what's the name of it?—*Modesty*!—is a quality in a lover more praised by the women then liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether Sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her fifty—my dear.

Lucy. What, would you have me tell her a lie?

Sir Luc. Ah then, you baggage! I'll make it a truth presently.

Lucy. For shame now! here is some one coming.

Sir Luc. Oh, faith. I'll quiet your conscience!

[*Sees* FAG—*Exit, humming a tune.*

Enter FAG

Fag. So, so ma'am. I humbly beg pardon.

Lucy. O Lud! now, Mr. Fag—you flurry one so.

Fag. Come, Lucy, here's no one by—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please.——You play false with us, madam.——I saw you

give the baronet a letter.—My master shall know this—and if he don't call him out, I will.

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty.——That letter was from Mrs. Malaprop, simpleton.—She is taken with Sir Lucius's address.

Fag. How! what tastes some people have!—Why, I suppose I have walked by her window an hundred times.—But what says our young lady? Any message to my master?

Lucy. Sad news! Mr. Fag.—A worse rival than Acres! Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

Fag. What, Captain Ahsolute?

Lucy. Even so—I overheard it all.

Fag. Ha! ha! ha! very good, faith. Good-bye, Lucy, I must away with this news.

Lucy. Well, you may laugh—but it is true, I assure you. (*Going*.) But—Mr. Fag—tell your master not to be cast down by this.

Fag. Oh, he'll be so disconsolate!

Lucy. And charge him not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

Fag. Never fear!—never fear!

Lucy. Be sure—bid him keep up his spirits.

Fag. We will—we will. [*Exeunt severally*.

ACT III

SCENE I.—*The North Parade*

Enter ABSOLUTE

Abs. 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed.—Whimsical enough, faith! My father wants to *force* me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with!—He must not know of my connexion with her yet awhile.—He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters.—However, I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed—but I can assure him it is very *sincere*.—So, so,——here he comes.—He looks plaguy gruff. [*Steps aside.*

Enter Sir ANTHONY

Sir Anth. No—I'll die sooner than forgive him.—*Die*, did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him.—At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper.—An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy!—Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters!—for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a year, besides his pay, ever since!—But I have done with him;—he's anybody's son for me.—I never will see him more,—never—never—never—never.

Abs. Now for a penitential face.

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way.

Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Abs. A sincere penitent.— I am come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that ?

Abs. I have been revolving and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me. 30

Sir Anth. Well, sir ?

Abs. I have been likewise weighing and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, puppy ?

Abs. Why then, sir, the result of my reflections is a resolution to sacrifire every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why, now you talk sense—absolute sense—I never heard anything some sensible in my life——Confound you ! you shall be Jack again. 41

Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you why the lady really is.—Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare.——What think you of Miss Lydia Languish ?

Abs. Languish ? What, the Languishes of Worcestershire ?

Sir Anth. Worcestershire ! No. Did you never meet Mrs. Malaprop and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment ? 53

Abs. Malaprop ! Languish ! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay—I think I do

recollect something.———*Languish* ! *Languish* ! She squints, don't she ?——A little red-haired girl ?

Sir Anth. Squints !——A red-haired girl !——Zounds ! no.

Abs. Then I must have [forgot ; it can't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack ! Jack ! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen ?

Abs. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent.—If I can please you in the matter, 'tis all desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but Jack, such eyes ! such eyes ! so innocently wild ! so bashfully irresolute ! Not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love !—Then, Jack, her cheeks ! her cheeks, Jack ! so deeply blushing at the insinuation of her tell-tale eyes !—Then, Jack, her lips ! Oh ! Jack, lips smiling at their own discretion ; and if not smiling, more sweetly pouting ; more lovely in sullenness !

Abs. That's she indeed.—Well done, old gentleman ! [*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Then, Jack her neck !—Oh, Jack ! Jack !

Abs. And which is to be mine, sir, the niece or the aunt ?

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you. When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket ? The *aunt*, indeed ! —Odds life ! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched anything old or ugly to gain an empire.

Abs. Not to please your father, sir ?

Sir Anth. To please my father !—Zounds ! not to

please——Oh, my father——Odd so !——yes—yes ; if my father indeed had desired——that's quite another matter.—Though he wa'n't the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

Abs. I daresay not, sir.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful ?

Abs. Sir, I repeat it—if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. No that I think a woman the worse for being handsome ; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind—now, without being very nice, I own I should rather choose a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back : and though *one* eye may be very agreeable, yet as the prejudice has always run in favour of *two*, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is ! Why, sirrah, you're an anchorite !—a vile, insensible stock—You a soldier !—you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on !—Odds life ! I've a great mind to marry the girl myself !

Abs. I am entirely at your disposal, sir : if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the *aunt* ; or if you should change your mind, and take the old lady—'tis the same to me—I'll marry the *niece*.

Sir Anth. Upon my words, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or——but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie—I'm sure it must—come, now—damn your demure face !—come, confess, Jack—you have been lying—ha'n't you? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey?—I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't been lying and playing the hypocrite.

Abs. I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you, should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty! But come along with me, I'll wirte a note to Mrs. Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethean torch to you,—come along, I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't egad, I'll marry the girl myself!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—JULIA'S *Dressing-room*

FAULKLAND *solus*

Faulk. They told me Julia would return directly; I wonder she is not yet come!—How mean does this captious, unsatisfied temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment! Yet I know not that I indulge in it any other point;—but on this one subject, and to this one subject, whom I think I love beyond my life, I am ever ungenerously fretful and madly capricious!—I am conscious of it—yet I cannot correct myself! What tender honest joy sparkled in her eyes when we met!—How delicate was the warmth of her expression!—I was ashamed to appear less happy—though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulation:—yet I must be satisfied that she has not been so *very* happy in my absence.—She is coming!—Yes!—I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the moments of her stay. 17

Enter JULIA

Julia. I had not hoped to see you again so soon.

Faulk. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome— restrained as we were by the presence of a third person? 21

Julia. Oh, Faulkland, when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation.

Faulk. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia.—I *was* rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health—Sure I had no cause for coldness ?

Julia. Nay then, I see you have taken something ill. —You must not conceal from me what it is.

Faulk. Well, then—shall I own to you that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire—on your mirth—your singing—dancing, and I know not what ! —For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment in your absence as a treason to constancy :—The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Julia. Must I never cease to tax my Faulklaud with this teasing minute caprice ?—Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh in your breast against my tried affection ?

Faulk. They have no weight with me, Julia : No, no —I am happy if you have been so—yet only say, that you did not sing with *mirth*—say that you *thought* of Faulkland in the dance. 46

Julia. I never can be happy in your absence.—If I wear a countenance of content, it is to show that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth.—If I seemed sad, it were to make malice triumph ; and say, that I had fixed my heart on one, who left me to lament his roving, and my own credulity.—Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you, when I say, that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears. 55

Faulk. You were ever all goodness to me.—Oh, I am

a brute, when I but admit a doubt of your true constancy!

Julia. If ever without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affections veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity and base ingratitude.

Faulk. Ah! Julia, that last word is grating to me. I would I had no title to your *gratitude*! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps what you have mistaken for love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart!

Julia. For what quality must I love you?

Faulk. For no quality! To regard me for any quality of mind or understanding, were only to *esteem* me. And for person—I have often wished myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation *there* for any part of your affection.

Julia. Where nature has bestowed a show of nice attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it as misplaced. I have seen men, who in *this* vain article, perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

Faulk. Now this is not well from *you*, Julia.—I despise person in a man—yet if you loved me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

Julia. I see you are determined to be unkind—The *contract* which my poor father bound us in gives you more than a lover's privilege.

Faulk. Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts.——I would not have been more free—no—I am proud of my restraint.——Yet—yet—perhaps your high respect alone for this solemn compact has fettered your inclinations, which else had made a worthier choice.—How shall I be sure, had you remained unbound in thought and promise, that I should still have been the object of your persevering love?

Julia. Then try me now.—Let us be free as strangers as to what is past :—*my* heart will not feel more liberty !

Faulk. There now ! so hasty, Julia ! so anxious to be free !—If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not loose your hold, even though I wished it !

Julia. Oh ! you torture me to the heart ! I cannot bear it.

Faulk. I do not mean to distress you.—If I loved you less, I should never give you an uneasy moment.—But hear me.—All my fretful doubts arise from this :—Women are not used to weigh, and separate motives of their affections : the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart.——I would not boast—yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, nor character, to found dislike on ;—my fortune such as few ladies could be charged with indiscretion in the match.—Oh, Julia ! when *Love* receives such countenance from *Prudence*, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth. 109

Julia. I know not whither your insinuations would tend :—But as they seem pressing to insult me, I will spare you the regret of having done so.—I have given you no cause for this. [*Exit in tears.*

Faulk. In tears ! Stay, Julia : stay but for a moment. ——The door is fastened !—Julia !—my soul—but for one moment : I hear her sobbing !—'Sdeath ! what a brute am I to use her thus ! Yet stay.—Ay—she is coming now :—how little resolution there is in woman !—how a few soft words can turn them !——No, faith !—she is *not* coming either.——Why, Julia—my love—say but that you forgive me—come but to tell me that—now this is being *too* resentful : stay ! she is coming too—I thought she would—no *steadiness* in anything ! her going away must have been a mere trick then—she shan't see that I was hurt by it.—I'll affect indifference—(*hums a tune* ;

then listens)——No—Zounds! she's *not* coming!—nor don't intend it, I suppose. This is not *steadiness* but *obstinacy*! Yet I deserve it.—What, after so long an absence to quarrel with her tenderness!—'twas barbarous and unmanly!— I should be ashamed to see her now.—I'll wait till her just resentment is abated—and when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! and be linked instead to some antique virago, whose gnawing passions and long-hoarded spleen, shall make me curse my folly half the day and all the night. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—MRS. MALAPROP'S LODGINGS

MRS. MALAPROP, *with a letter in her hand, and* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Mrs. Mal. Your being Sir Anthony's son, captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Abs. Permit me to say, madam, that as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair at present is the honour of being allied to Mrs. Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs. Mal. Sir, you do me infinite honour!—I beg, captain, you'll be seated.—(*Sit.*)—Ah! few gentlemen, nowadays, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! few think how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman!—Men have no sense now but for the worthless flower of beauty!

Abs. It is but too true indeed, ma'am;—yet I fear our ladies should share the blame—they think our admiration of *beauty* so great, that *knowledge* in *them* would be superfluous. Thus, like garden-trees, they seldom show fruit,

till time has robbed them of the more specious blossom.—Few, like Mrs. Malaprop and the orange-tree, are rich in both at once!

Mrs. Mal. Sir, you overpower me with good-breeding—He is the very pine-apple of politeness! You are not ignorant, captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eaves-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows anything of.

Abs. Oh, I have heard the silly affair before.—I'm not at all prejudiced against her on *that* account.

Mrs. Mal. You are very good and very considerate, captain.—I am sure I have done everything in my power since I exploded the affair; long ago, I laid my positive conjunctions on her, never to think on the fellow agan;—I have since laid Sir Anthony's preposition before her; but, I am sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her.

Abs. It must be very distressing indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. Oh! it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree;—I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day, I have interceded another letter from the fellow! I believe I have it in my pocket.

Abs. Oh, the devil! my last note. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. Ay, here, it is.

Abs. Ay, my note indeed! Oh, the little traitress, Lucy! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. There, perhaps, you may know the writing. [*Gives him the letter.*

Abs. I think I have seen the hand before—yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before——

Mrs. Mal. Nay, but read it, captain.

Abs. (*Reads.*) *"My soul's idol, my adored Lydia!"*—Very tender indeed!

Mrs. Mal. Tender! ay, and profane too, o' my conscience!

Abs. *"I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the more so as my new rival——"*

Mrs. Mal. That's *you*, sir.

Abs. *"Has universally the character of benig an accomplished gentleman, and a man of honour."*—Well that's handsome enough. 62

Mrs. Mal. Oh, the fellow has some design in writing so.

Abs. That he had, I'll answer for him, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. But go on, sir,—you'll see presently.

Abs. *"As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon who guards you"*—Who can the mean by that?

Mrs. Mal. Me, sir—*me*—he means *me* there—what do you think now?—but go on a little farther.

Abs. Impudent scoundrel!—*"it shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her dress up her course features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand——"* 74

Mrs. Mal. There, sir, an attack upon my language! what do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! was ever such a brute! Sure if I reprehend anything in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!

Abs. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! let me see—*"same ridiculous vanity——"* 81

Mrs. Mal. You need not read it again, sir.

Abs. I beg pardon, ma'am—*"does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration"*—an impudent coxcomb!—*"so that I have a scheme*

to see you shortly with old harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interview."——Was ever such assurance!

Mrs. Mal. Did you ever hear anything like it?—he'll elude my vigilance, will he—yes, yes! ha! ha! he's very likely to enter these doors!—we'll try who can plot best!

Abs. So we will, ma'am—so we will.—Ha! ha! ha! a conceited puppy, ha! ha! ha!—Well, but, Mrs. Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while *I*, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead.

Mrs. Mal. I am delighted with the scheme; never was anything better perpetrated!

Abs. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now?—I should like to try her temper a little.

Mrs. Mal. Why, I don't know——I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind. There is a decorum in these matters.

Abs. Oh, Lord! she won't mind *me*—only tell her Beverley——

Mrs. Mal. Sir!

Abs. Gently, good tongue. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. What did you say of Beverley?

Abs. Oh, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley who was below—she'd come down fast enough then—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Mal. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves—besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to see her—ha! ha!—Let him if he can, I say again.—Lydia, come down here!—(*Calling.*)—He'll make me a *go-between in their interview!*—ha! ha! ha!—Come

down, I say, Lydia ! I don't wonder at your laughing, ha ! ha ! ha ! his impudence is truly ridiculous. 121

Abs. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, ma'am, ha ! ha ! ha !

Mrs. Mal. The little hussy won't hear.—Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is—she shall know that Captain Absolute is come to wait on her.—And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Abs. As you please, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. For the present, captain, your servant—Ah !—you've not done laughing yet, I see—*elude my vigilance !* yes, yes ; ha ! ha ! ha ! [*Exit.*

Abs. Ha ! ha ! ha ! one would think now that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security—but such is Lydia's caprice, that to undeceive her was probably to lose her.—I'll see whether she knows me. 136

[*Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the pictures.*

Enter LYDIA

Lydia. What a scene am I now to go through ! surely nothing can be more dreadful than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's heart.—I have heard of girls persecuted as I am, who have appealed in behalf of their favoured lover to the generosity of his rival : suppose I were to try it—there stands the hated rival—an officer too !—but oh, how unlike my Beverley !—I wonder he don't begin—truly he seems a very negligent wooer !—quite at his ease, upon my word !—I'll speak first—Mr. Absolute.

Abs. Ma'am. [*Turns round.*

Lydia. Oh, Heavens ! Beverley !

Abs. Hush !—hush, my life ! softly ! be not surprised !

Lydia. I am so astonished ! and so terrified ! and so overjoyed !—for Heavens' sake ! how came you here ? 151

Abs. Briefly. I have deceived your aunt—I was informed that my new rival was to visit here this evening, and contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on *her* for Captain Absolute.

Lydia. Oh, charming !—And she really takes you for young Absolute ?

Abs. Oh, she's convinced of it.

Lydia. Ha ! ha ! ha ! I can't forbear laughing to think how her sagacity is overreached ! 160

Abs. But we trifle with our precious moments—such another opportunity may not occur—then let me now conjure my kind, my condsecending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and with a licensed warmth plead for my reward.

Lydia. Will you then, Beverly, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth ?—that burden on the wings of love ?

Abs. Oh, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness—Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay. 172

Lydia. How persuasive are his words !—how charming will poverty be with him !

Abs. Ah ! my soul what a life will we then live ! Love shall be our idol and support ! we will worship him with a monastic strictness ; abjuring all worldly toys, to centre every thought and action there. Proud of calamity, we will enjoy the wreck of wealth ; while the surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love show doubly bright—By Heavens ! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand, to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia

to my bosom, and say, the world affords no smile to me but here—— [*Embracing her.*
If she holds out now, the devil is in it! [*Aside.*

Lydia. Now could I fly with him to the antipodes! but my persecution is not yet come to a crisis.

Enter Mrs. MALAPROP, *listening*

Mrs. Mal. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside.*

Abs. So pensive, Lydia!—is then your warmth abated?

Mrs. Mal. Warmth abated!—so!—she has been in a passion, I suppose.

Lydia. No—nor ever can while I have life.

Mrs. Mal. An ill-tempered little devil!—She'll be in a passion all her life—will she?

Lydia. Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me.

Mrs. Mal. Very dutiful, upon my word!

Lydia. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

Mrs. Mal. I am astonished at her assurance!—to his face—this is to his face!

Abs. Thus then let me enforce my suit. [*Kneeling.*

Mrs. Mal. Ay, poor young man!—down on his knees entreating for pity!—I can contain no longer.—Why, thou vixen!—I have overheard you.

Abs. Oh. confound her vigilance! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. Captain Absolute, I know not how to apologise for her shocking rudeness.

Abs. So—all's safe, I find. [*Aside.*
I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady——

Mr. Mal. Oh, there's nothing to be hoped for from her! she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile.

Lydia. Nay, madam, what do you charge me with now?

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou unblushing rebel—didn't you tell this gentleman to his face that you loved another better?—didn't you say you never would be his?

Lydia. No, madam—I did not.

Mrs. Mal. Good heavens! what assurance!—Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying doesn't become a young woman!—Didn't you boast that Beverley, that stroller Beverley, possessed your heart?—Tell me that, I say.

Lydia. 'Tis true, ma'am, and none but Beverley——

Mrs. Mal. Hold!—hold, Assurance!—you shall not be so rude.

Abs. Nay, pray, Mrs. Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech:— she's very welcome to talk thus—It does not hurt *me* in the least, I assure you.

Mrs. Mal. You are *too* good, captain—*too* amiably patient— but come with me, miss.—Let us see you again soon, captain—remember what we have fixed.

Abs. I shall, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lydia. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev——!

Mrs. Mal. Hussy! I'll choke the word in your throat! —come along—come along.

[*Exeunt severally.* ABSOLUTE *kissing his hand to* LYDIA—MRS. MALAPROP *stopping her from speaking.*

SCENE IV.—ACRES'S *Lodgings*

ACRES *and* DAVID—ACRES *as just dressed.*

Acres. Indeed, David—do you think I become it so?

David. You are quite another creature, believe me, master, by the mass! an' we've any luck we shall see the Devon monkerony in all the print-shops in Bath!

Acres. Dress *does* make a difference, David.

David. 'Tis all in all, I think—difference! why, an' you were to go now to Clod Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you: Master Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes, and Mrs. Pickle would cry, Lord preserve me!", our dairy-maid would come giggling to the door, and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat—Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house but would bark, and I question whether Phillis would wag a hair of her tail!

Acres. Ay, David, there's nothing like polishing.

David. So I say of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

Acres. But, David, has Mr. De-la-grace been here? I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.

David. I'll call again, sir.

Acres. Do——and see if there are any letters for me at the post-office.

David. I will.——By the mass, I can't help looking at your head!—if I hadn't been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself. [*Exit.*

[ACRES *comes forward, practising a dancing step.*

Acres. Sink, slide—coupee—Confound the first inventors of cotillion! say I—they are as bad as algebra to us country gentlemen—I can walk a minute easy enough when I am forced!—and I have been accounted a good

stick in a country-dance.—Odds jigs and tabors!—I never valued your cross-over to couple—figure in—right and left—and I'd foot it with e'er a captain in the country!—but these outlandish heathen allemandes and cotillions are quite beyond me!—I shall never prosper at'em, that's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't understand their curst French lingo!—their *pas* this, and *pas* that, and *pas* t'other!—damn me! my feet don't like to be called paws! no, 'tis certain I have most Anti-Galliean toes!

Enter SERVANT

Serv. Here is Sir Lucius O'Trigger to wait on you, sir.

Acres. Show him in.

Enter SIR LUCIUS

Sir Luc. Mr. Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir Luc. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

Acres. Faith! I have followed Cupid's Jack-a-lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last. In short, I have been very ill-used, Sir Lncius.—I don't choose to mention names, but look on me as on a very ill-used gentleman.

Sir Luc. Pray, what is the case?—I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, Sir Lucius, I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival; and receive answer, that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of.—This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill-used.

Sir Luc. Very ill, upon my conscience.—Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why, there's the matter: she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath.—Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it.

Sir Luc. A rival in the case, is there ?—and you think he has supplanted you unfairly ?

Acres. Unfairly ! to be sure he has.—He never could have done it fairly ?

Sir Luc. Then sure you kuow what is to be done.

Acres. Not I, upon my soul !

Sir Luc. We wear no swords here, but you understand me.

Acres. What ! fight him !

Sir Luc. Ay, to be sure : what can I mean else ?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir Luc. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world.—Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another than to fall in love with the same woman ? Oh, by my soul ! it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

Acres. Breach of friendship ! Ay, ay, but I have no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life.

Sir Luc. That's no argument at all—he has the less right then to take such a liberty.

Acres. God, that's true—I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius !—I fire apace ! Odds hilts and blades ! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it ! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side ?

Sir Luc. What the devil signifies *right*, when your *honour* is concerned ? Do you think Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever inquired where the right lay ? No, by my soul, they drew their broad-swords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

Acres. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart ! I believe courage must be catching !—I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising as it were——a kind of

courage, as I may say——Odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

Sir Luc. Ah, my little friend! if I had *Blunderbus*[3] *Hall* here, I could show you a range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the new room: every one of whom had killed his man!—For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipt through my fingers, I thank heavens, our honour and the family-pictures are as fresh as ever.

Acres. Oh, Sir Lucius! I have had ancestors too! every man of 'em colonel or captain in the militia!——Odds balls and barrels, say no more—I'm braced for it. ——The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast!——Zounds; as the man in the play says, "I could do such deeds——"

Sir Luc. Come, come, there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius——I must be in a rage.—Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me.——Come, here's pen and paper.—(*Sits down to write.*)—I would the ink were red!—Indite, I say indite!—How shall I begin? Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

Sir Luc. Pray compose yourself.

Acres. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme.

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! do the thing decently, and like a Christian. Begin now—"*Sir*"—

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir Luc. "*To prevent the confusion that might arise,*——"

Acres. Well——

Sir Luc. "*From our both addressing the same lady*——"

Acres. Ay—there's the reason—"same lady"—Well——

Sir Luc. "*I shall expect the honour of your company*——"

Acres. Zounds! I'm not asking him to dinner.

Sir Luc. Pray be easy.

Acres. Well then, "honour of your company"

Sir Luc. "*To settle our pretensions*——" 132

Acres. Well.

Sir Luc. Let me see, ay, King's Mead-fields will do——"*in King's Mead-fields.*"

Acres. So that's done.—Well, I'll fold it up presently my own crest—a hand and dagger shall be the seal.

Sir Luc. You see now this little explanation will put a stop at once to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Ay, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir Luc. Now, I'll have you to fix your own time.—Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening if you can; then let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir Luc. So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening——I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expense of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman, to call him out. 153

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life! I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson.

Sir Luc. I shall be very proud of instructing you.—— Well, for the present——but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do everything in a mild and agreeable manner.——Let your courage be as keen, but at the same time as polished, as your sword. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT IV

SCENE I.—ACRES'S *Lodgings*

ACRES *and* DAVID

David. Then, by the mass, sir! I would do no such thing—ne'er a Sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say, when she hears o't?

Acres. Ah! David, if you had heard Sir Lucius!—Odds sparks and flames! he would have roused your valour.

David. Not he, indeed. I hate such bloodthirsty cormorants. Look'ee, master, if you'd wanted about at boxing, quarter-staff, or short-staff, I should never be the man to bid you cry off; but for your curst sharps and snaps, I never knew any good come of 'em.

Acres. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

David. Ay, by the mass! and I would be very careful of it; and I think in return my ***honour*** couldn't do less than to be very careful of ***me***.

Acres. Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

David. I say then, it would be but civil in ***honour*** never to risk the loss of a *gentleman*.—Look'ee, master, this *honour* seems to me to be a marvellous false friend: ay,

truly, a very courtier-like servant.—Put the case, I was a gentleman (which, thank God, no one can say of me); well—my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance.—So—we fight. (Pleasant enough that.) Boh!—I like him—(the more's my luck). Now, pray who gets the profit of it?—Why, my *honour*. But put the case that he kills me!—by the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy.

Acres. No, David—in that case!—Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

David. Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it.

Acres. Zounds! David, you are a coward!—It doesn't become my valour to listen to you.—What, shall I disgrace my ancestors?—Think of that, David—think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors!

David. Under favour, the surest may of not disgracing them, is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look'ee now, master, to go to them in such haste—with an ounce of lead in your brains—I should think might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should choose to have a visiting acquaintance with.

Acres. But, David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, *very* great danger, hey?—Odds life! people often fight without any mischief done!

David. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!——Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow, I warrant, with his damn'd double-barrelled swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols!—Lord bless us! It makes me tremble to think o't!——Those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons! Well, I never could abide 'em—from a child I never could fancy 'em!—I suppose there an't

been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Zounds! I *won't* be afraid—Odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid.——Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend Jack Absolute to carry it for me.

David. Ay, i' the name of mischief, let *him* be the messenger.—For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter!—It is, as I may say, a designing, and malicious-looking letter;—and I warrant smells of gunpowder like a soldier's pouch!—Oons! I wouldn't swear it mayn't go off!

Acres. Out, you poltroon!—you han't the valour of a grasshopper.

David. Well, I say no more—'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod Hall!—but I ha' done.—How Phillis will howl when she hears about it!—Ay, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after!—And I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

Enter SERVANT

Serv. Captain Absolute, sir.

Acres. Oh, show him up. [*Exit* SERVANT.

David. Well, heaven send we be all alive this time to-morrow.

Acres. What's that!—Don't provoke me, David!

David. Good-bye, master. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven. [*Exit* DAVID.

Enter ABSOLUTE

Abs. What's the matter, Bob ?

Acres. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead !—If I hadn't the valour of St. George and the dragon to boot——

Abs. But what did you want with me, Bob ? 90

Acres. Oh !—There. [*Gives him the challenge.*

Abs. "*To Ensign Beverley.*" So—what's going on now ? [*Aside.*
Well, what's this ?

Acres. A challenge !

Abs. Indeed !—Why, you won't fight him, will you, Bob ?

Acres. Egad, but I will, Jack.—Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage—and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Abs. But what have I to do with this ? 101

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

Abs. Well, give it to me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack ; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Abs. Not in the least—I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. Yes are very kind.——What is it to have a friend !——You couldn't be my second--could you, Jack ?

Abs. Why, no, Bob—not in *this* affair—it would not be quite so proper. 113

Acres. Well, then, I must get my friend Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack?

Abs. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Enter SERVANT

Serv. Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the captain.

Abs. I'll come instantly——Well, my little hero, success attend you! [*Going.*

Acres. Stay, stay, Jack.—If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow—will you, Jack?

Abs. To be sure, I shall.——I'll say you are a determined dog—hey, Bob?

Acres. Ay, do, do—and if that frightens him, egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a week; will you, Jack?

Abs. I will, I will; I'll say you are called in the country "*Fighting Bob.*"

Acres. Right—right—'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life if I clear my honour.

Abs. No!—that's very kind of you.

Acres. Why, you don't wish me to kill him—do you, Jack?

Abs. No, upon my soul, I do not.—But a devil of a fellow, hey? [*Going.*

Acres. True, true—but stay—stay, Jack—you may and, that you never saw me in such a rage before—a most devouring rage!

Abs. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

Abs. Ay, ay, "*Fighting Bob!*" [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II. MRS. MALAPROP'S *Lodgings*

MRS. MALAPROP *and* LYDIA

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou perverse one !—tell me what you can object to him ?—Isn't he a handsome man ?—tell me that.—A genteel man ? a pretty figure of a man ?

Lydia. She little thinks whom she is praising ! (*Aside.*) —So is Beverley, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. No caparisons, miss, if you please.—Caparisons don't become a young woman.—No ! Captain Absolute is indeed a finp gentleman !

Lydia. Ay, the Captain Absolute *you* have seen. 9
[*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. Then he's *so* well bred ;—*so* full of alacrity and adulation !—and has *so much* to say for himself :—in such good language too !—his physiognomy so grammatical !—Then his presence is so noble !—I protest when I saw him, I thought of that Hamlet says in the play :—"Hesperian curls—the front of *Job* himself ! an eye, like *March*, to threaten at command !—a station, like Harry Mercury,—new——" Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly.

Lydia. How enraged she'll be presently when she discovers her mistake ! [*Aside.*

Enter SERVANT

Serv. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, ma'am. 22

Mrs. Mal. Show them up here. [*Exit* SERVANT. Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman.—Show your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

Lydia. Madam, I have told you my resolution!—I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

[*Flings herself into a chair, with her face from the door.*

Enter Sir ANTHONY *and* ABSOLUTE

Sir Anth. Here we are, Mrs. Malaprop; come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty,—and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow.—I don't know what's the matter; but if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

Mrs. Mal. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair— I am ashamed for the cause! Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you!—pay your respects! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. I hope, madam, that Miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and *my* alliance.—Now, Jack, speak to her. [*Aside to him.*

Abs. What the devil shall I do! (*Aside*) You see, sir, she won't even look at me, whilst you are here.—I knew she wouldn't!—I told you so—Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together!

[ABSOLUTE *seems to expostulate with his father.*

Lydia. (*Aside*). I wonder I ha'n't heard my aunt exclaim yet! sure she can't have looked at him!—— perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind.

Sir Anth. I say, I won't stir a foot yet.

Mrs. Mal. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my influence over my niece is very small.—Turn round, Lydia; I blush for you! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself, that Miss Languish

will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son! —Why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy—speak! [*Aside to him.*

Mrs. Mal. It is imposible, Sir Anthony, she can have any.—She will not say she has.—— Answer, hussy! why don't you answer? [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.——Zounds! sirrah! why don't you speak! [*Aside to him.*

Lydia. (*Aside*) I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.——How strangely blind my aunt must be! 66

Abs. Hem! hem! madam—hem! (ABSOLUTE *attempts to speak, then returns to* ANTHONY) Faith! sir, I am so confounded!—and—so—so—confused!—I told you I should be so, sir,—I knew it.—The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir Anth. But it doesn't take away your voice, fool, does it?—Go up, and speak to her directly! 73

[ABSOLUTE *makes signs to* Mrs. MALAPROP *to leave them together.*

Mrs. Mal. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together? —Ah! you stubborn little vixen! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Not yet, ma'am, not yet!—what the devil are you at? unlock your jaws, sirrah, or—— [*Aside to him.*

[ABSOLUTE *draws near* LYDIA.

Abs. Now heaven send she may be too sullen to look round!—I most disguise my vice. [*Aside.*

[*Speaks in a low hoarse tone.*

—Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love?—Will not—— 81

Sir Anth. What the devil ails the fellow?—Why don't

you speak out?—not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsy!

Abs. The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—my modesty, quite chokes me!

Sir Anth. Ah! your *modesty* again! I'll tell you what, Jack; if you don't speak out directly, and glibly too, I shall be in such a rage!—Mrs. Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side-front.

[Mrs. MALAPROP *seems to chide* LYDIA.

Abs. So all will out, I see!

[*Goes up to* LYDIA, *speaks softly.*

Be not surprised, my Lydia, suppress all surprise at present.

Lydia. (*Aside*). Heavens! 'tis Beverley's voice!—Sure he can't have imposed on Sir Anthony too!

[*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*

Is this possible!—my Beverley!—how can this be?—my Beverley?

Abs. Ah! 'tis all over. [*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Beverley!—the devil—Beverley!—What can the girl mean?—This is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs. Mal. For shame, hussy! for shame!—your head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes!—beg Captain Absolute's pardon directly.

Lydia. I see no Captain Absolute, but my loved Beverley!

Sir Anth. Zounds! the girl's mad!—her brain's turned by reading!

Mrs. Mal. O my conscience, I believe so!—What do you mean by Beverley, hussy?—You saw Captain

Absolute before to-day; there he is—your husband that shall be.

Lydia. With all my soul, ma'am—when I refuse my Beverley——

Sir Anth. Oh! she's as mad as Bedlam!—or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick? Come here, sirrah, who the devil are you?

Abs. Faith, Sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect.

Sir Anth. Are you my son or not?—answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

Mrs. Mal. Ay, sir, who are you? Oh, mercy! I begin to suspect!—

Abs. Ye powers of Impudence, befriend me! (*Aside*) Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself to be *yours* also, I hope my duty has always shown.—Mrs. Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer—and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew.—I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name, and a station, which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in an elevated character.

Lydia. So!—there will be no elopement after all! [*Sullenly.*

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! to do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Abs. Oh, you flatter me, sir,—you—compliment—'tis my *modesty*, you know, sir—my *modesty* that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull,

insensible varlet you pretended to be, however !—I'm glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog—I am —So this was your *penitence*, your *duty* and *obedience* ! —I thought it was damn'd sudden !—You *never hard their names before*, not you !—*What*, The LANGUISHES *of* Worcestershire, hey ?—*if you could please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired* ! —Ah ! you dissembling vlllain !—What ! (*pointing to* LYDIA) *she squints, don't she ?—a little red-haird girl !*—hey ?—Why, you hypocritical young rascal !—I wonder you a'n't ashamed to hold up your head !

Abs. 'Tis with difficulty, sir—I *am* confused—very much confused, as you must perceive.

Mrs. Mal. Oh, Lud ! Sir Anthony !—a new light breaks in upon me!—hey !—how ! what ! captain, did *you* write the letters then ?—What—am I to thank *you* for the elegant compilation of "*an old weather-beaten she-dragon*"—hey ?—Oh! mercy !—was it *you* that reflected on my parts of speech ?

Abs. Dear sir ! my modesty will be overpowered at last, if you don't assist me.—I shall certainly not be able to stand it !

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs. Malaprop, we must forget and forgive ;—odds life ! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart to be so good-humoured ! and so gallant ! hey ! Mrs. Malaprop !

Mrs. Mal. Well, Sir Anthony, since *you* desire it, we will not anticipate the past ;—so mind, young people—our retrospection will be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together ; Mrs. Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant !—Jack—isn't the check as I said, hey ?—and the eye, you rogue !—and the lip—hey ? Come, Mrs.

Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—theirs is the time of life for happiness!——"Youth's the season made for joys"—(*sings*)—hey!—Odds life! I'm in such spirits,—I don't know what I could not do!—Permit me, ma'am—(*gives his hand to* Mrs. MALAPROP)—(*sings*) Tol-de-rol—'gad, I should like to have a little fooling myself—Tol-de-rol! de-rol! 181

[*Exit singing and handing* Mrs. MALAPROP.

[LYDIA *sits sullenly in her chair.*

Abs. So much thought bodes me no good. (*Aside.*) So grave, Lydia!

Lydia. Sir!

Abs. So!—egad! I thought as much!—that damn'd monosyllable has froze me! (*Aside*)—What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our friends' consent, as in our mutual vows——

Lydia. *Friends' consent* indeed! [*Peevishly*

Abs. Come, come, we must lay aside some of our romance—a little *wealth* and *comfort* may be endured after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as—— 193

Lydia. *Lawyers*! I hate lawyers!

Abs. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the licence, and——

Lydia. *Licence*! I hate licence!

Abs. Oh, my love! be not so unkind!—thus let me entreat—— [*Kneeling.*

Lydia. Pshaw!—what signifies kneeling when you know I *must* have you? 201

Abs. (*Rising.*) Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you.—If I have lost your heart—I resign the rest.—Gad, I must try what a little *spirit* will do. [*Aside.*

Lydia. (*Rising*). Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud.—What, you have been treating *me* like a child!—humouring my romance! and laughing, I suppose, at your success!

Abs. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me—only hear——

Lydia. So, while *I* fondly imagined we were deceiving my relation, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all—behold my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation—and *I* am myself the only dupe at last! (*Walking about in a heat*)—But here, sir, here is the picture—Beverley's picture! (*taking a miniature from her bosom*) which I have worn, night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties!—There, sir (*flings it to him*), and be assured I throw the original from my heart as easily.

Abs. Nay, nay, ma'am, we will not differ as so that—Here *taking out a picture*), here is Miss Lydia Languish—What a difference!—ay, *there* is the heavenly assenting smile that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes!—those are the lips which sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar!—and there the half-resentful blush, that *would* have checked the ardour of my thanks—Well, all that's past!—all over indeed!—There, madam—in beauty, that copy is not equal to you, but in my mind its merit over the original, in being still the same, is such—that I cannot find in my heart to part with it.

[*Puts it up again.*

Lydia (*Softening.*) 'Tis *your own* doing, sir—I, I, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied.

Abs. Oh, most certainly—sure, now, this is much better than being in love!—ha! ha! ha!—there's some

spirit in *this* !—What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises :—all that's of no consequence, you know.—To be sure people will say, that miss didn't know her own mind—but never mind that !—or, perhaps, they may be ill-natured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

Lydia. There's no bearing his insolence.

[*Bursts into tears.*

Enter MRS. MALAPROP *and* SIR ANTHONY

Mrs. Mal. (*Entering.*) Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing awhile.

Lydia. This is worse than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate. [*Sobbing.*

Sir Anth. What the devil's the matter now !—Zounds! Mrs. Malaprop, this is the *oddest billing* and *cooing* I ever heard !—but what the deuce is the meaning of it ?—I am quite astonished !

Abs. Ask the lady, sir.

Mrs. Mal. Oh, mercy !—I'm quite analysed, for my part !—why, Lydia, what is the reason of this ?

Lydia. Ask the gentleman, ma'am.

Sir Anth. Zounds I ! shall be in a frenzy !—why, Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you ?

Mrs. Mal. Ay, sir, there's no more trick, is there ;—you are not like Cerberus, *three* gentlemen at once, are you ?

Abs. You'll not let me speak—I say the lady can account for this much better than I can.

Lydia. Ma'am, you once commanded me never to think of Beverley again—there is the man—I now obey

you :—for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever.

[*Exit* LYDIA.

Mrs. Mal. Oh, mercy! and miracles! what a turn here is—why sure, captain, you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my niece.

Sir Anth. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!—now I see it—Ha! ha! ha!—now I see it—you have been too lively, Jack. 274

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word——

Sir Anth. Come, no lying, Jack—I'm sure *'twas* so.

Mrs. Mal. Oh, Lud! Sir Anthony! Oh, fie, captain!

Abs. Upon my soul, ma'am——

Sir Anth. Come, no excuses, Jack;—why your father, you rogue, was so before you:—the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient.—Ha! ha! ha! poor little Lydia!—who, you've frightened her, you dog, you have. 222

Abs. By all that's good, sir——

Sir Anth. Zounds! say no more, I tell you—Mrs. Malaprop shall make your peace—You must make his peace, Mrs. Malaprop:—you must tell her 'tis Jack's way—tell her 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our family!—Come away, Jack—Ha! ha! ha! Mrs. Malaprop—a young villain! [*Pushes him out*

Mrs. Mal. Oh! Sir Anthony!—Oh, fie, captain!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III—*The North Parade*

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER

Sir Luc. I wonder where this Captain Absolute hides himself.—Upon my conscience! these officers are always in one's way in love affairs:—remember I might have married Lady Dorothy Carmino, if it had not been for a

little rogue of a major, who ran away with her before she could get a sight of me !—And I wonder to what it is the ladies can see in them to be so fond of them—unless it be a touch of the old serpent in 'em, that makes the little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth.—Hah ! isn't this the captain coming ?—faith it is !—There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking ! Who the devil is he talking to ?

[*Steps aside.*

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Abs. To what fine purpose I have been plotting ! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul !—a little gipsy !—I did not think her romance could have made her so damn'd absurd either,—'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in my life !—I could cut my own throat or any other person's with the greatest pleasure in the world !

Sir Luc. Oh, faith ! I'm in the luck of it.—I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose—to be sure I'm just come in the nick ! Now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteely.

[SIR LUCIUS *goes up to* ABSOLUTE,

——With regard to that matter, captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Abs. Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant—because, sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir Luc. That's no reason—For give me leave to tell you, a man may ***think*** an untruth as well as speak one.

Abs. Very true, sir ; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir Luc. Then, sir, you differs in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

Abs. Hark'ee, Sir Lucius,—if I had not before known you to be a gentleman, upon my soul, I should not have discovered it at this interview:—for what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

Sir Luc. I humbly thank you, sir, for the quickness of your apprehension—(*Bowing*)—you have named the very thing I would be at.

Abs. Very well, sir—I shall certainly not balk your inclinations:——but I should be glad you would please to explain your motives.

Sir Luc. Pray, sir, be easy—the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands—we should only spoil it, by trying to explain it.—However, your memory is very short—or you could not have forgot an affront you passed on me within this week.—So, no more, but name your time and place.

Abs. Well, sir, since you are so beat on it, the sooner the better;—let it be this evening—here by the Spring Gardens.—We shall scarcely be interrupted.

Sir Luc. Faith! that same interruption in affairs of this nature shows very great ill-breeding——I don't know what's the reason, but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness.—However, if it's the same to you, captain, you should take it as a particular kindness, if you'd let us meet in King's Mead-fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may despatch both matters at once.

Abs. 'Tis the same to me exactly.—A little after six, then, we will discuss this matter more seriously.

Sir Luc. If you please, sir; there will be very pretty small-sword light, though it won't do for a long shot—So that matter's settled! and my mind's at ease.

[*Exit* Sir LUCIUS.

Enter FAULKLAND, *meeting* ABSOLUTE

Abs. Well met.—I was going to look for you.—Oh, Faulkland! all the demons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vexed, that if I had not the prospect of a resource in being knocked o'the head by and by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

Faulk. What can you mean?——Has Lydia changed her mind?—I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

Abs. Ay, just as the eyes do of a person who squints:—when her love-eye was fixed on me—t'other—her eye of duty, was finely obliqued:—but when duty bid her point that the same way—off t'other turned on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

Faulk. But what's the resource you——

Abs. Oh, to wind up the whole, a good-natured Irishman here has (*mimicking* Sir LUCIUS) begged leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat—and I mean to indulge him—that's all.

Faulk. Prithee, be serious.

Abs. 'Tis fact upon my soul.—Sir Lucius O'Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet him this evening at six o'clock:—'tis on that account I wished to see you—must go with me.

Faulk. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure—Sir Lucius shall explain himself—and I daresay matters may

be accommodated :—but this evening, did you say ?—I wish it had been any other time.

Abs. Why ?—There will be light enough :—there will (as Sir Lucius says) "be very pretty small-sword light, though it will not do for a long shot."—Confound his long shots ! 102

Faulk. But I am myself a good deal ruffled, by a difference I have had with Julia—my vile, tormenting temper has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

Abs. By heavens ! Faulkland, you don't deserve her.

Enter SERVANT, *gives* FAULKLAND *a letter.*

Faulk. Oh, Jack ! this is from Julia—I dread to open it—I fear it may be to take a last leave—perhaps to bid me return her letters—and restore—Oh ! how I suffer for my folly ! 111

Abs. Here—let me see.

[*Takes the letter and opens it.*

Ay, a final sentence, indeed !—'tis all over with you, faith !.

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don't keep me in suspense.

Abs. Hear then—"*As I am convinced that my dear Faulkland's own reflections have already upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I will not add a word on the subject.—I wish to speak with you as soon as possible.—Yours—ever and truly,* JULIA."——There's stubbornness and resentment for you ? [*Gives him the letter.* Why, man, you don't seem one whit the happier at this.

Faulk. Oh, yes, I am—but—but— 123

Abs. Confound your *buts* !—You never hear anything that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately damn it with a *but*.

Faulk. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own honestly—don't you think there is something forward—something indelicate in this haste to forgive?—Women should never sue for reconciliation:—that should always come from us.—They should return their coldness till *woo'd* to kindness—and their *pardon*, like their *love* should "not unsought be won." 133

Abs. I have not patience to listen to you: thou'rt incorrigible!—so say no more on the subject.—I must go to settle a few matters—let me see you before six—remember—at my lodgings.—A poor industrious devil like me, who have toiled, and drudged, and plotted to gain my ends, and am at last disappointed by other people's folly—may in pity be allowed to swear and grumble a little;—but a captious sceptic in love, a slave to fretfulness and whim—who has no difficulties but of his own creating—is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion. [*Exit* ABSOLUTE.

Faulk. I feel his reproaches:—yet I would not change this too exquisite nicety, for the gross content with which *he* tramples on the thorns of love.—His engaging me in this duel has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue.—I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness—if her love proves pure and sterling ore, my name will rest on it with honour!—and once I've stamped it there, I lay aside my doubts for ever: but if the dross of selfishness, the alloy of pride predominate—'twill be best to leave her as a toy for some less cautious fool to sigh for. [*Exit* FAULKLAND.

ACT V

SCENE I—JULIA'S *Dressing-room*

JULIA *sola*

——How this message has alarmed me! what dreadful accident can he mean? why such charge to be alone? ——Oh, Faulkland!—how many unhappy moments—how many tears have you cost me!

Enter FAULKLAND

Julia. What means this?—why this caution, Faulkland?

Faulk. Alas! Julia, I am come to take a long farewell.

Julia. Heavens! what do you mean?

Faulk. You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited.—Nay, start not!—the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me.—I left you fretful and passionate—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel—the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly. Oh, Julia, had I been so fortunate as to have called you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment! 16

Julia. My soul is oppressed with sorrow at the nature of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought that I could now chase from your

bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love.——My heart has long known no other guardian—I now intrust my person to your honour—we will fly together.—When safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled—and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a cherub's hand, shall smooth the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

Faulk. Oh, Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude! but the time is so pressing, it calls on you for so hasty a resolution.—Would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forgo, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you beside his solitary love?

Julia. I ask not a moment.—No, Faulkland, I have loved you for yourself: and if now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love.—But let us not linger.—Perhaps this delay——

Faulk. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark.—Yet am I grieved to think what numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

Julia. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act.—I know not whether 'tis so—but sure, that alone can never make us unhappy.—The little I have will be sufficient to support us; and exile never should be splendid.

Faulk. Ay, but in such an abject state of life, my wounded pride perhaps may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose companion, beyond your patience to endure. Perhaps the recollection of a deed my conscience cannot justify may haunt me in such gloomy and unsocial fits, that I shall

hate the tenderness that would relieve me, break from your arms, and quarrel with your fondness!

Julia. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over and console you:—one who, by bearing *your* infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you *so* to bear the evils of your fortune.

Faulk. Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and with this useless device I throw away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

Julia. Has no such disaster happened as you related?

Faulk. I am ashamed to own that it was pretended; yet in pity, Julia do not kill me with resenting a fault which never can be repeated: but sealing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of Heavens, receive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly, by years of tender adoration.

Julia. Hold, Faulkland!—that you are free from a crime, which I before feared to name, Heaven knows how sincerely I rejoice!—These are tears of thankfulness for that! But that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an imposition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang, more keen than I can express!

Faulk. By heavens! Julia——

Julia. Yet hear me.——My father loved you, Faulkland! and you preserved the life that tender parent gave me; in his presence I pledged my hand—joyfully pledged it—where before I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seemed to me that Providence had, in Faulkland, shown me whither to transfer, without a pause, my grateful duty, as well as my affection: hence I have been content to bear from you what pride and delicacy would have forbid me from another.—I will not

upbraid you, by repeating how you have trifled with my sincerity.—

Faulk. I confess it all ! yet hear——

Julia. After such a year of trial, I might have flattered myself that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel as unncessary ! I now see it is not in your nature to be content, or confident in love. What this conviction—I never will be yours. While I had hopes that my persevering attention, and unreproaching kindness, might in time reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gained a dearer influence over you ; but I will not furnish you with a licensed power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expense of one who never would contend with you. 113

Faulk. Nay, but, Julia, by my soul and honour, if after this——

Julia. But one word more.—As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another.—I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity ; and the dearest blessing I can ask of Heaven to send you will be to charm you from that unhappy temper, which alone has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement. upon this infirmity, and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of—let it not be your *least* regret, that it lost you the love of one—who would have followed you in beggary through the world ! [*Exit.*

Faulk. She's gone !—for ever ! There was an awful resolution in her manner, that riveted me to my place. ——O fool !—dolt !—barbarian !—Curst as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow-wretches, kind Fortune sent a Heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side !—I must now haste to my appointment.—Well, my mind is tuned for such a scene.—I shall wish only to become a principal in

it, and reverse the tale my cursed folly put me upon forging here.——O Love !—tormentor ! fiend !—whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them, but meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness ! [*Exit.*

Enter MAID *and* LYDIA

Maid. My mistress, ma'am, I know, was here just now —perhaps she is only in the next room. [*Exit* MAID

Lydia, Heigh-ho !—Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe one lecture from my grave cousin will make me recall him. 134

Enter JULIA

Lydia. Oh, Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation.—Lud ! child, what's the matter with you ?—You have been crying—I'll be hanged, if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you !

Lydia. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness !— Something *has* flurried me a little.—Nothing that you can guess at.——I would not accuse Faulkland to a sister ! [*Aside*

Lydia. Ah ! whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them.——You know who Beverley proves to be ? 145

Julia. I will now own to you, Lydia that Mr. Faulkland had before informed me of the whole affair. Had young Absolute been the person you took him for, I should not have accepted your confidence on the subject, without a serious endeavour to counteract your caprice.

Lydia. So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one!—but I do n't care—I'll never have him. 152

Julia. Day, Lydia——

Lydia. Why, is it not provoking ? when I thought we

were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last—— There, had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements !—so becoming a disguise !—so amiable a ladder of ropes !—Conscious moon—four horses—Scotch person—with such surprise to Mrs. Malaprop—and such paragraphs in the newspapers !—Oh, I shall die with disappointment !

Julia. I don't wonder at it !

Lydia. Now—sad reverse !—what have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation with a bishop's licence, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar : or perhaps be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish to join John Absolute and Lydia Languish, spinster ! Oh, that I should live to hear myself called Spinster !

Julia. Melancholy, indeed !

Lydia. How mortifying, to remember the dear delicious shifts I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow !—How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden, stuck like a dripping statue !—There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough so pathetically ! he shivering with cold and I with apprehension ! and while the freezing blast numbed our joints, how warmly would he press me to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour ! Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love.

Julia. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you ; but it suits more the situation of my mind, at present, earnestly to entreat you not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer than unhappiness from your caprice, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

Lydia. Oh, Lud ! what has brought my aunt here ?

Enter MRS. MALAPROP, FAG, *and* DAVID

Mrs. Mal. So ! so ! here's fine work !—here's fine suicide, paracide, and simulation going on in the fields ! and Sir Anthony not to be found to prevent the antistrophe !

Julia. For Heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this ?

Mrs. Mal. That gentleman can tell you—'twas he enveloped the affairs to me.

Lydia. Do, sir, will you, inform us ? [*To* FAG.

Fag. Ma'am. I should hold myself very deficient in every requisite that forms the man of breeding, if I delayed a moment to give all the information in my power to a lady so deeply interested in the affairs as you are.

Lydia. Be quick ! quick, sir !

Fag. True, ma'am, as you say, one should be quick in divulging matters of this nature ; for should we be tedious, perhaps while we are flourishing on the subject, two or three lives may be lost !

Lydia. Oh, patience !—Do ma'am, for Heavens' sake ! tell us what is the matter ?

Mrs. Mal. Why ! murder's the matter ! salughter's the matter ! killing's the matter !—but he can tell you the perpendiculars.

Lydia. Then, prithee, sir, be brief.

Fag. Why then, ma'am, as to murder—I cannot take upon me to say—and as to slaughter, or manslaughter, that will be as the jury finds it.

Lydia. But who, sir,—who are engaged in this ?

Fag. Faith, ma'am, one is a young gentleman whom I should be very sorry anything was to happen to—a very

pretty-behaved gentleman !—We have lived much together, and always on terms.

Lydia. But who is this ? who ! who ! who !

Fag. My master, ma'am—my master—I speak of my master.

Lydia. Heavens ! What, Captain Absolute !

Mrs. Mal. Oh, to be sure, you are frightened now !

Julia. But who are with him, sir ?

Fag. As to the rest, ma'am, this gentleman can inform you better than I.

Julia. Do speak, friend. [*To* DAVID.

David. Look'ee, my lady——by the mas ! there's mischief going on. Folks don't use to meet for amusement with fire-arms, firelocks, fire-engines, fire-screens, fire-office, and the devil knows what other crackers besides ! ——This, my lady, I say, has an angry favour.

Julia. But who is there beside Captain Absolute, friend ?

David. My poor master—under favour for mentioning him first.—You know me, my lady—I am David—and my master of course is, or *was*, 'Squire Acres.—Then comes 'Squire Faulkland.

Julia. Do, ma'am, let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief.

Mrs. Mal. Oh, fie !—it would be very inelegant in us : we should only precipitate things.

David. Ah ! do, Mrs. Aunt, save a few lives—they are desperately given, believe me.—Above all, there is that blood-thirsty Philistine, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs. Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger !—Oh mercy ! have they drawn poor little dear Sir Lucius into the scrape ?—

Why, how you stand, girl ! you have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire petrifactions !

Lydia. What are we to do, madam ?

Mrs. Mal. Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief !—here, friend—you can show us the place ?

Fag. If you please, ma'am, I will conduct you—David, do you look for Sir Anthony. [*Exit* DAVID.

Mrs. Mal. Come, girls !—this gentleman will exhort us.—Come, sir, you're our envoy—lead the way, and we'll precede.

Fag. Not a step before the ladies for the world !

Mrs. Mal. You're sure you know the spot.

Fag. I think I can find it, ma'am ; and one good thing is, we shall hear the report of the pistols as we draw near so we can't well miss them ;—never fear, ma'am, never fear.

[*Exeunt, he talking.*

SCENE II.—*South Parade*

Enter ABSOLUTE, *putting his sword under his great-coat*

Abs. A sword seen in the streets of Bath would raise as great an alarm as a mad dog.—How provoking this is in Faulkland !—never punctual ! I shall be obliged to go without him at last Oh, the devil ! here's Sir Anthony ! ——how shall I escape him ?

[*Muffles up his face, and takes a circle to go off.*

Enter Sir ANTHONY

Sir Anth. How one may be deceived at a little distance ! only that I see he don't know me, I could have sworn that was Jack !—Hey !—Gad's life's ! it is—Why, Jack, what are you afraid of ? hey !—sure I'm right.—Why, Jack—Jack Absolute ! [*Goes up to him.*

Abs. Really, sir, you have the advantage of me :—I don't remember ever to have had the honour—my name is Saunderson, at your service. 13

Sir Anth. Sir, I beg your pardon—I took you—hey ?' why, zounds ! it is——Stay—— [*Looks up to his face.* So, so—your humble servant, Mr. Saunderson !—Why, you scoundrel, what tricks are you after now ?

Abs. Oh ! joke, sir, a joke !—I came here on purpose to look for you, sir.

Sir Anth. You did ! well, I am glad you were so lucky : but what are you muffled up so far ?—what's this for ?—hey ? 22

Abs. 'Tis cool, sir : isn't it ?—rather chilly somehow but I shall be late—I have a particular engagement.

Sir Anth. Stay—Why, I thought you were looking for me?—Pray, Jack, where is't you are going?

Abs. Going, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay—where are you going?

Abs. Where am I going?

Sir Anth. You, unmannerly puppy!

Abs. I was going, sir, to—to—to—to Lydia—sir, to Lydia—to make matters up if I could;—and I was looking for you, sir,—to—to—

Sir Anth. To go with you, I suppose.—Well, come along.

Abs. Oh! zounds! no, sir, not for the world!—I wished to meet with you, sir—to—to—to—You find it cool, I'm sure, sir—you'd better not stay out.

Sir Anth. Cool!—not at all—Well, Jack—and what will you say to Lydia?

Abs. Oh, sir, beg her pardon, humour her—promise and vow:—but I detain you, sir—consider the cold air on your gout.

Sir Anth. Oh, not at all!—not at all!—I'm in no hurry.—Ah! Jack, you youngsters, when once you are wounded here—

[*Putting his hand to* ABSOLUTE'S *breast.*

Hey! what the deuce have you got here?

Abs. Nothing, sir—nothing.

Sir Anth. What's this?—here's something damn'd hard.

Abs. Oh, trinkets,! trinkets—a bauble for Lydia!

Sir Anth. Nay, let me see your taste.

[*Pulls his coat open, the sword falls.*

Trinkets !—a bauble for Lydia !—Zounds ! sirrah, you are not going to cut her throat, are you ?

Abs. Ha ! ha ! ha !—I thought it would divert you, sir, though I did't mean to tell you till afterwards.

Sir Anth. You didn't !— Yes, this is a very diverting trinket, truly.

Abs. Sir, I'll explain to you.—You know, sir, Lydia is romantic—dev'lish romantic, and very absurd, of course : —now, sir I intend, if she refuses to forgive me—to unsheath this sword—and swear—I'll fall upon its point, and expire at her feet !

Sir Anth. Fall upon a fiddle-stick's end !—why, I suppose it is the very thing that would please her—Get along, you fool !

Abs. Well, sir, you shall hear of my success—you shall hear.—"Oh, Lydia !—forgive me, or this pointed steel" —says I.

Sir Anth. "Oh, booby ! stab away, and welcome"— says she.—Get along !—and damn your trimkets !

[*Exit* ABSOLUTE.

Enter DAVID, *running*

David. Stop him ! stop him ! Murder ! Thief ! Fire ! —Stop fire ! Stop fire !—Oh ! Sir Anthony—call ! call ! bid'm stop ! Murder ! Fire !

Sir Anth. Fire ! Murder ! where ?

David. Oons ! he's hot of sight ! and I'm out of breath ! for my part ! Oh, Sir Anthony, why didn't you stop him ? why didn't you stop him ?

Sir Anth. Zounds ! the felow's mad !—Stop whom ? stop Jack ?

David. Ay, the captain, sir !—there's murder and slaughter——

Sir Anth. Murder!

David. Ay, please you, Sir Anthony, there's all kinds of murder, all sorts of slughter to be seen in the fields: there's fighting going on, sir—bloody sword-and-gun fighting!

Sir Anth. Who are going to fight, dunce?

David. Everybody that I know of, Sir Anthony:—everybody is going to fight, my poor master, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, your son, the captain— 91

Sir Anth. Oh, the dog!—I see his tricks;—do you know the place?

David. King's Mead-fields.

Sir Anih. You know the way?

David. Not an inch;—but I'll call the mayor—aldermen—constables—church wardens— and beadles—we can't be too many to part them.

Sir Anth. Come along—give me your shoulder!—we'll get assistance as we go—the lying villain!—Well, I shall be in such a frenzy—So—this was the history of his trinkets! I'll bauble him! [*Exeunt*

SCENE III.—*King's Mead-fields*

Sir LUCIUS *and* ACRES *with pistols*

Acres. By my valour! then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance—Odds levels and aims!—I say it is a good distance.

Sir Luc. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave those things to me.—Stay now—I'll show you.

[*Measures paces along the stage.*

There now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Zounds ! we might as well fight in a sentry-box ! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Luc. Faith ! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight !

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, but I should think forty or eight-and-thirty yards—

Sir Luc. Pho ! pho ! nonsense ! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistol is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no !—by my valour ! there is no merit in killing him so near : do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot :—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me !

Sir Luc. Well—the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you ?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius—but I don't understand—

Sir Luc. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A quietus !

Sir Luc. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled and sent home ?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey ?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled !—snug lying in the Abbey !—Odds tremors ! Sir Lucius, don't talk so !

Sir Luc. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Luc. Ah; that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing.—Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files!—I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius—there (*Puts himself in an attitude*)—aside from her?—Odd! I'll make myself small enough:—I'll stand edgeways.

Sir Luc. Now—you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—— [*Levelling at him.*

Acres. Zounds! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cock'd?

Sir Luc. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir Luc. Pho! be easy—Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side—'twill he very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir Luc. But, there—fix yourself so—(*Placing him*)—let him see the broad side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all.

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean—through me!

Sir Luc. Ay—may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look'ee! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lief be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one—so, by my valour! will stand edgeways.

Sir Luc. (*Looking at his watch.*) Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah !—no, faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey !—what !—coming !——

Sir Luc. Ay—Who are those yonder getting over the stile ?

Acres. There are two of them indeed !—well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius !—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir Luc. Run !

Acres. No—I say—we *won't* run, by my valour !

Sir Luc. What the devil's the matter with you ?

Acres. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did.

Sir Luc. Oh, fie ! consider your honour.

Acres. Ay—true—my honour—Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

Sir Luc. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*

Acres. Sir Lucius—if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid—if my valour should leave me !—Valour will come and go.

Sir Luc. Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going !—it is sneaking off !—I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands !

Sir Luc. Your honour—your honour.—Here they are.

Acres. Oh, mercy !—now—that I was safe at Clod Hall ! or could be shot before I was aware !

Enter FAULKLAND *and* ABSOLUTE

Sir Luc. Gentlemen, your most obedient.—Hah !—what, Captain Absolute !—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for

Second of Faulkland (He think Beverly).

your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account.

Acres. What, Jack—my dear Jack !—my dear friend !

Abs. Hark'ee, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir Luc. Well, Mr. Acres—I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly.—So, Mr. Beverley (*to* FAULKLAND), if you'll choose your weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. *My* weapons, sir !

Acres. Odds life ! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr. Faulkland ; these are my particular friends.

Sir Luc. What, sir, did not you come here to fight Mr. Acres ?

Faluk. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir Luc. Well, now, that's mighty provoking ! But I hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game—you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party by sitting out.

Abs. Oh, pray, Faulkland, fight to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on the matter——

Acres. No, no, Mr. Faulkland—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian.—Look'ee, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight ; and if it is the same to you, I'd as life let it alone.

Sir Luc. Observe me, Mr. Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—and you came here to fight him—Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Why, no—Sir Lucius—I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not

show his face ! If *he* were here, I'd make his give up his pretensions directly !—

Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case.—The person who assumed that name is before you ; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please. 141

Sir. Luc. Well, this is lucky—Now you have an opportunity——

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend Jack Absolute—not if he were fifty Beverleys ! Zounds ! Sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

Sir Luc. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, your valour has *oozed* away with a vengeance !

Acres. Not in the least ! Odds backs and abettors ! I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a *quietus*, you may command me entirely. I'll get you *snug lying* in the *Abbey here* : or *pickle* you, and send you over to Blunderbuss Hall, or anything of the kind, with the greatest pleasure. 154

Sir Luc. Pho ! pho ! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a *coward* ; coward was the word, by my valour !

Sir Luc. Well, sir ?

Acres. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word coward—*coward* may be said a in joke—But if you had called me a *poltroon*, odds daggers and balls——162

Sir Luc. Well, sir ?

Acres.——I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir Luc. Pho ! you are beneath my notice.

Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second

than my friend Acres—He is a most *determind dog*—called in the country. *Fighting Bob.*—He generally *kills a man a week*—don't you, Bob?

Acres. Ay—at home!— 171

Sir Luc. Well then, captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor—(*draws his sword*)—and asks the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him.

Abs. Come on then, sir—(*draws*); since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply.

Enter Sir ANTHONY, DAVID, *and the* WOMEN

David. Knock 'em all down, sweet, Sir Anthony; knock down my master in particular—and bind his hands over to their good behaviour!

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a frenzy—how came you in a duel sir? 182

Abs. Faith, sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I; 'twas he called on me, and you know, sir, I serve his Majesty.

Sir Anth. Here's a prety fellow! I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me, he serves his Majesty!—Zounds! sirrah, then how durst you draw the king's sword against one of his subjects?

Abs. Sir, I tell you! that gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons? 191

Sir Luc. Gad! sir, how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons?

Sir Luc. Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Zounds! Jack, how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

Mrs. Mal. Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies—Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so?—Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you. 202

Abs. For fear I should be killed, or escape, ma'am?

Mrs. Mal. Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinced; speak, child.

Sir Luc. With your leave, ma'am, I must put in a word here—I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence. —Now mark——

Lydia. What is it you mean, sir?

Sir Luc. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now—this is no time for trifling.

Lydia. 'Tis true, sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections. 214

Abs. Oh! my little angel, say you so?—Sir Lucius—I perceive there must be some mistake here, with regard to the affront which you affirm I have given you. I can only say, that it could not have been intentional. And as you must be convinced, that I should not fear to support a real injury—you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—I ask your pardon. —But for this lay, while honoured with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever. 223

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy.

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to anything in the world—and if can't get a wife, without fighting for her, by my valour! I'll live a bachelor.

Sir Luc. Captain, give me your hand—an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation—and as for the lady—if she chooses to deny her own handwriting here—— [*Takes out letters.*

Mrs. Mal. Oh, he will dissolve my mystery!—Sir Lucius, perhaps there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate——

Sir Luc. Pray, old gentleman, don't interfere where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

Lydia. Indeed, Sir Lucius, I am not.

(LYDIA *and* ABSOLUTE *walk aside.*)

Mrs. Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes, I am Delia.

Sir Luc. You Delia—pho! pho! be easy.

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke—those letters are mine—When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir Luc. Mrs. Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick upon me, I am equally beholden to you.—And, to show you I am ungrateful, Captain Absolute, since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Abs. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's my friend, Fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir Luc. Hah! little Valour—here, will you make your fortune?

Acres. Odds wrinkles! No.—But give me your hand, Sir Lucius, forget and forgive; but if ever I give you a chance of *pickling* me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs. Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs. Mal. Oh, Sir Anthony !—men are all barbarians.

[*All retire but* JULIA *and* FAULKLAND.

Julia. He seems dejected and unhappy—not sullen—there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman ! how true should be your judgment when your resolution is so weak !

Faulk. Julia !—how can I sue for what I so little deserve ? I dare not presume—yet Hope is the child of Penitence. 271

Julia. Oh ! Faulkland, you have not been more faulty in your unkind treatment of me, then I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for yours.

Faulk. Now I shall be blest indeed ! 277

[Sir ANTHONY *comes forward.*

Sir Anth. What's going on here ?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant.——Come, Julia, I never interfered before ; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.—All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland seemed to proceed from what he calls the *delicacy* and *warmth* of his affections for you——There, marry him directly, Julia ; you'll find he'll mend surprisingly ! [*The rest come forward.*

Sir Luc. Come now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content ; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better——

Acres. You are right, Sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy—Mr. Faulkland the same,—Ladies,—come now, to show you I'm neither vexed no angry, odds tabors and pipes ! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour to the New Rooms—and I insist on your all meeting me there. 294

Sir Anth. Gad ! sir, I like your spirit ; and at night

we single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop.

Faulk. Our partners are stolen from us, Jack—I hope to be congratulated by each other— yours for having checked in time the errors of an ill-directed imagination, which might have betrayed an innocent heart ; and mine, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one, who by it made wretched whom he loved most, and tortured the heart he ought to have adored.

Abs. Well, Faulkland, we have both tasted the bitters as well as the sweets, of love—with this difference only, that you always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while I——

Lydia. Was always obliged to me for it, hey ! Mr. Modesty ?——But come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unalloyed as general.

Julia. Then let us study to preserve it so : and while Hope pictures to us a flattering sense of future bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts deserving happiness would unite their fortunes, Virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest, hurtless flowers ; but ill-judging Passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them, when its leaves are dropt

EPILOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

SPOKEN BY MRS. BULKLEY

LADIES, for *you*—I heard our poet say—
He'd try to coax some *moral* from his play :
"One moral's plain," cried I, "without more fuss ;
Man's social happiness all rests on us :
Though all the drama—whether damn'd or not—
Love gilds the *scene*, and *women* guide the *plot*.
From every rank obedience is our due—
D'ye doubt ?—The world's great stage shall prove it true."
The Cit, well skill'd to shun domestic strife,
Will sup abroad ;—but first, he'll ask his *wife* :
John Trot, his friend, for once will do the same,
But then—he'll just *step home to tell his dame*.
The *surly Squire* at noon resolves to rule,
And half the day—Zounds !—Madam is a fool !
Convinced at night, the vanquish'd victor says,
Ah, Kate ! you women have such coaxing ways !
The *jolly Toper* chides each tardy blade,
Till reeling Bacchus calls on Love for aid :
Then with each toast he sees fair bumpers swim,
And kisses Chloe on the sparkling brim !
Nay, I have heard that Statesmen—great and wise—
Will *sometimes* counsel with a lady's eyes ;
The servile suitors watch her various face,
She smiles preferment, or she frowns disgrace,

Curtsies a pension here—there nods a place.
Nor with less awe, in scenes of humbler life,
Is *view'd* the *mistress*, or is *heard* the *wife*.
The poorest Peasant of the poorest soil,
The child of poverty, and heir to toil,
Early from radiant Love's impartial light
Steals one small spark to cheer his world of night:
Dear spark! that oft through winter's chilling woes
Is all the warmth his little cottage knows!
The wand'ring *Tar*, who not for *years* has press'd
The widow'd partner of his *day of rest*,
On the cold deck, far from her arms removed,
Still hums the ditty which his Susan loved:
And while around the cadence rude is blown,
The boatswain whistles in a softer tone.
The *Soldier*, fairly proud of wounds and toil,
Pants for the *triumph* of his Nancy's smile;
But ere the battle should he list her cries,
The lover trembles—and the hero dies!
That heart, by war and honour steel'd to fear,
Droops on a sigh, and sickens at a tear!
But ye more cautious, ye nice-judging few,
Who give to Beauty only Beauty's due,
Though friends to Love—*ye* view with deep regret
Our conquests marr'd, our triumphs incomplete.
Till polish'd Wit more lasting charms disclose,
And Judgment fix the darts which Beauty throws.
—In female breasts did sense and merit rule,
The lover's mind would ask no other school;
Shamed into sense, the scholars of our eyes,
Our beaux from *gallantry* would soon be wise;
Would gladly light, their homage to improve,
The lamp of Knowledge at the torch of Love!

NOTES AND REFERENCES

PROLOGUE I

Prologue—It was an old method with the playwrights for introducing their play to the audience. It was usually in the manner of a discourse, written in verse, and chanted to the audience by, either the dramatist himself or by one or more of the popular actors. Among the two prologues, prefixed to this play, the first is in the form of conversation spoken by two actors, Mr. Woodward and Mr. Quick and the second is in the form of a speech spoken by Mrs. Bulkley. The aim of a prologue, apart from a formal introduction, was, to explain the purpose of the play, to beg excuse for the shortcomings in it and to appeal to the indulgence of the audience for patient hearing.

Mr. Woodward—As indicated in the *Dramatis Personae*, he played the part of Capt. Absolute in the play at its first performance. His Part in the prologue is that of the Sergeant-at-Law.

Mr. Quick—He represented Bob Acres in the play. In the Prologue he speaks in the part of the Attorney.

Sergeant-at-Law—A member of a superior grade of barristers, whose business it was to argue a case before the judges, while the brief of the case was earlier prepared by an attorney. The system was abolished in 1880.

Attorney—As hinted above, he is a junior barrister. He prepares a summary of the facts in a law-suit and gives it to the Sergeant-at-Law, along with his fees.

Following—Coming after the senior barrister.

Giving a paper—Handing over the prepared brief.

L-1. *A vile cramp hand*—Very bad handwriting, hard to

make out. Although he pretends that the hand is bad and without his spectacles he cannot read, what he is actually hinting at, is, that he has yet not got his fees.

2. *He means his fee*—He means he cannot read the brief as long as he does not get his fees.

3. *Try again*—The attorney gives him his fees and asks him to try to read the script again.

4. *The Scrawl improves*—As the fee is received the illegible handwriting becomes legible.
More—More fee is given by the attorney.
Pretty plain—The handwriting which had only improved a moment before becomes quite clear on getting more fees.

The students should note the humour and satire in the above lines.

5. *Dibble*—The name of the attorney.

6. *A poet's brief*—The barrister learns that he has to argue the case of a poet.
A poet and a fee—The poets are usually known to be very poor ; so the barrister's surprise on getting the fees from a poet. The hypocritical barrister hints that he might even have done the work of a poet without any fees.

7. *You without reward etc.*—The attorney tickles the barrister by saying that he knew the barrister would have pleaded the poet's case even without his fees.

8. *Muse*—The goddess of poetry.
So ! So !—That is indeed true. Exactly so.

9. *If the fee offends etc.*—While the attorney compliments the barrister on his generosity he takes the responsibility of the offence (having given him fees for a poet's cause) upon himself.

10. *No offence*—I am not at all offended.

11. *Some sons.........we meet*—Phoebus is the god of songs. Apollo in Greek mythology who gives political inspiration. Sons of Phoebus are, therefore, poets. The line means that we often meet poets in law-courts ; i.e. many lawyers are poets.

12. *And fifty . . . . . the Fleet*—Fifty, i.e. many more poets can be found even in the debtor's prison. Fleet was the name of a small river by the side of which the debtor's prison was situated. There is a pun on the word.

13-14. *Nor pleads . . . . . waste of wig*—A poet lawyer is not the worse lawyer for being a poet. *Wig* is a large headdress of artificial hair-worn by the barristers. *Wig* here refers to the lawyer's brain. *Legal waste of a wig* is the barren health of i.e. the dry intellect of a lawyer. *Bays* refers to the bay tree whose leaves formed as wreaths were used as crowns to reward the conquerors and poets. The line therefore means that if the dry intellect of a poet is adorned with bays, i.e. poetry, he does not become a worse lawyer for that.

15. *Full bottomed heroes*—Heroes refers to judges and the king's counsel who wear wigs that are full-bottomed, i.e. come down to their shoulders.

On signs—Just like a sign-board.

Unfurt—Show ; exhibit.

16. *A leaf laurel*—The above mentioned leaf—signifying poetry.

In a grove of curl—Curly hair of the wig. The learned judges also show their love of poetry thus.

17. *In adverse days*—In unhappy conditions.

18. *This wig . . . . . of days*—A good lawyer is better than a great poet.

19. *Client's place supply*—Argue, as my client would in his defence.

20. *Profuse of robe*—Wearing a big gown.
Prodigal of tie—With a costly and proportionately big tie.

21. *Those blushing powers of face*—While in the heat of the argument, looking red in the face and thus wielding effective influence.

22. *Wonted, bashful, hesitating grace*—With the usual show of modesty and passion, shown turn by turn. This is a very common thing with the barristers. Since they have to

dissemble a lot, they show themselves sometimes gracefully hesitating and sometimes hotly arguing to influence the judge.

23. *Rise in .... the case*—The attorney does not want to argue any more with the barrister on the topic of the respective merits of a lawyer and a poet ; so he requests him to rise up before the court, i e. the audience and plead eloquently the case of his client (Sheridan).

The attorney now goes out and the Sergeant rises to speak in defence of the poet.

24-25. *For practice ..... the poet*—For pleading the case I, Sergeant Woodward, have been appointed the counsel. My name can be seen on the brief as a proof of it.

26. *Used to the ground*—Being an experienced lawyer, accustomed to rising on the floor of the court to plead cases.

27. *Dread court*—Court of which all are afraid. Here the public.

From whence . . . .appeal—For other cases an appeal can be made to a higher court but if the audience has once shown its disapproval of the play, its judgment is final and has to be accepted.

28. *No tricking here*—The clever lawyers cannot dupe the public by their usual tricks.
To blunt the edge of law—By using their tricks the lawyers cannot lessen the severity of legal justice.

29. *Dam'd in equity*—"when really guilty, escape on some technical legal flaw in the suit" (Nettleton).
Escape by flaw—Avoid punishment because of some loophole in the law.

30. *Judgment given . . . . remain*—If once any judgment has been given by the audience it becomes final. The punishment awarded will have to be accepted.

31. *No writ . . . . Drury Lane*—If the poet fails in his trial here, i.e. at the Covent Garden Theatre, no writ of error (an appeal to higher court for fresh trial because of some unfairness to the party in the lower court) can be made to the only other theatre in Drury Lane. There were only two

theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, where legally the plays could be produced. *The Rivals* was first produced at Covent Garden. So Sheridan says that if his play fails before the Covent Garden audience, it cannot be presented again before the Drury Lane audience for reconsideration.

32. *Past dispute*—Beyond doubt.

33. *Gain some favour*—He feels that his audience is undoubtedly favourably inclined to him.
If . . . of suit—The favour will be gained even if no profits are made out of the performance.

34. *No spleen is here*—There is no ill-will or favour in the judgment of the audience.
No boarded fury—Nor is there any anger collected in people.

35. *Milder jury*—More lenient judges. The poet flatters the audience that it is fair-minded and kind.

36. *Sad else our plight*—If as stated above the audience was not lenient and fair the poets lot would be pitiable indeed.
Frowns are transportation—The disapproval of the public is as bad as the sentence of transportation for life or if the audience disapprovcs the play it will have to be banished from the stage.

37. *A hiss the gallows*—If the people indulge in hissing to express their disapproval, it would be fatal to the play as are the gallows to a man.
A groan damnation—Groaning also refers to the expression of disapproval because of the poor quality of the play. Damn means to condemn.

38. *Public candour*—The impartiality of the public.

39. *Waves*—Waives ; forgoes.
Rights of challenge—Right of appealing against the judgment of the public.

40. *No newsman . . . . is dismissed*—The ropresentatives of the press are present among the audience to report the merits and demerits of the play to their papers. The poet does not want to dismiss them among the judges of the play.

41. *Wit*—Men of high intellectual attainments.
Critic—Who follows the profession of a critic.
We scratch off the list—Are not allowed to act as judges. Whoever they are, all the members of the audience are accepted as the judges of the play.

42. *His fault can never hurt*—If there is any fault it is the playwright's and it will harm only him.

43. *His crime . . . . to please*—Even if the play fails, his worst crime would be that he attempted to please all while he could not.

44. *All respecting*—With due deference to all.

45. *By the . . . . or fall*—Fail or succeed according to the verdict of the whole public.

N.B. The play was withdrawn after the first night's performance for having failed. After revision it was reproduced after few days. To suit the occasion lines 5·10 From "Hey ! how's this" to "no offence at all") were omitted and the following ten lines inserted in their place.
Hows this ! . . . . again—The Sergeant-at-Law is surprised to find that the attorney has come to hand over to him another brief of the poet's case.

Cast, I suppose—He soon discovers that it the same old brief only recast because of earlier failure.
We found . . . . the cause—The attorney replies that the audience did not reject the play outright. In spite of strict laws, the court, i.e. the audience looked indulgently to its merits.

By judges mild . . . . another trial—We were fortunate to have so sympathetic judges that, being unaccustomed to severe rejection, they allowed a reproduction of the play.
Did you mend . . . our proceedings—The barrister asks the attorney if the many mistakes in the original text of the brief have been suitably corrected.

Come courage . . . . fee—The attorney assures him that the play has been very much improved upon, so much so that it has now become almost a new play (new brief). Hence the counsel has been brought fresh fees for his labour.

PROLOGUE II

Spoken on the tenth Night—The play was unexpectedly successful in its revised form on the 28th January 1775. It held the stage for ten days, which was no common achievement in those days. Encouraged by this Sheridan wrote a fresh prologue which was spoken by Mrs. Bulkley.

Mrs. Bulkley—As given in the *Dramatis Personae*, she acted the part of Julia. Here she speaks on behalf of the author.

L. 1. *Granted our cause*—The play having succeeded, an appeal was made to the judges through the Sergeant-at-Law to accept his suit and it was won. The words 'suit' and 'trial' refer to the prologue earlier spoken, in which legal terminology was throughout employed.

2. *The Worthy Sergeant*—There is no need of a barrister now, since the play has succeeded.

3. *In pleasing*—In attempting to please the public.

A different client—Sheridan has selected to plead the cause of the Muse.

4. *He served. . . . . . . the Muse*—The sergeant in Prologue I appeared to represent the poet ; the poet will now advocate the case of the Muse of Comedy. The dramatist means that he would rather not defend himself but the true spirit of his art of comedy which was in a miserable condition at the moment.

6. *A female Counsel*—Since the Prologue is being spoken by a female, Mrs. Bulkley.

In a female's cause—The cause is of the Muse of Comedy, who also is a female.

7. *Look on this from*—Mrs. Bulkley points to the form of the goddess of Comedy who is usually represented with her favourite ivy branch, a shepherd's stick and a comic mask. *Quaint and Sly*—Attractive in its old-fashioned appearance and charmingly ironical.

8. *Dimples. . . . . .eyes*—The face of comedy has a very sweet smile dancing on her lips, hence her cheeks get dimpled and the eyes give a bright appearance.

9-10. *Where gay. . . . . .smiles*—Gay invention refers to the happy plot of a comedy where gay love-tricks reign supreme and the end is always replete with laughter and love's success.

11. *Light mask*—The mask worn by the goddess of Comedy. *Covers Satire's strokes*—conceals the satire that might otherwise pinch.

12. *Hides the. . . . .provokes*—Conceals the natural blush produced by the witty remarks in the comedy.

13. *Does she. . . . . . . .to teach*—Does this type of comedy full of romance, love, and laughter, seem to have preaching or moralizing as its aim ?

14. *This lady*—The goddess of Comedy.

15. *Is gray experience. . . . .youth* ?—Full of youthful fun and frolic ; it being the nature of comedy. She is not expected to possess wisdom, which old age possesses as a result of long experience.

16. *Do solemn. . . . .mouth*—Serious ideas do not look suitable in her mouth. On her face smiles and laughter look natural whereas with solemn things her face loses its charms.

Throughout these four lines the idea of Sheridan was that preaching and moralizing is in no way the aim of true comedy.

17. *Bid her be grave*—If comedy is perforce made serious in its theme and treatment.

17-18. *Those lips. . . ..mirth or love*—The lips of comedy would rebel against the subjects that go contrary to gaiety and

love-making. Comedy would no more be comedy if forced to be serious.

19. *Thus adorned. . . . .art*—Made charming with the above-mentioned dimpled cheeks, beaming eyes, amorous hint and smiles etc.

20. *Charm the fancy*—Give pleasure to imagination.
Reach the heart—Be pleasing to the heart also.

21. *Must we displace her*—Is it proper and good that true comedy, i.e. fun and frolic or wit and humour should be brought down from the stage?
And instead advance—In place of gay comedy bring forth on the stage.

22. *The goddess. . . . .countenance* :—The goddess of the sentimental comedy is here referred as a goddess with a melancholy face because of the predominance of tears and forced pity in it. In the famous Spanish satire of the heroic strain 'Don Quixote', the hero of the same name, has been referred as "The Knight of the Rueful Countenance" because he was always over-serious in his behaviour even when his exploits and adventures repeatedly led him to foolish and laughable situations. The author of this famous work was Cervantes.

23. *The Sentimental Muse*—Same as the goddess of the woeful countenance. See note on 'Comedy before Sheridan'.

23-A *Emblems*—Signs or symbols by which this goddess is to be marked.

24. *The Pilgrim's Progress*—The famous book by Bunyan. Bunyan was a very religious man. He wrote this book describing the passage of a Christian from here to the city of gold *i.e.*, Heaven. The obvious purpose of the author was to preach, to tell people how to live religious life.

A sprig of rue—'Rue' is a herb, a twig of which is used by the Christians in their religious ceremonies to sprinkle holy water. Thus rue is symbolic of religious attitude.

The idea is that just as the Greek Muses of comedy and tragedy had their signs by which they were always

marked similarly the Muse of sentimental Comedy can have, as suitable symbols, Bunyan's book and the leaves of rue, these things in their turn standing for moral preachings and religious attitude. Obviously the remark is satiric.

25. *Too Chaste. . . . . .and blood* :—The Sentimental Comedy had such an excess of moralisings and preachings that it did not remain quite human, natural human emotions and feelings like love and laughter being banished from it.

26. *Primly. . . . . .wood*—Demurely engraved on an emblem of wood to signify that it was *wooden* and not of flesh and blood.

27-28. *There fix'd. . . .Sister's hand*—The Sentimental Muse is the usurper because she has usurped the function of tragedy in being moral and solemn. Her sister is the muse of tragedy, whose emblem is dagger. This dagger has been snatched by Comedy.

29. *Votaries*—Admirers ; patrons.
Weep a flood—Shedding a flood of tears as the Sentimental Comedy demands.

30. *She will. . . . .in blood*—The Sentimental Comedy might be so constructed that in the end some protagonist in the play might die and yet it may be called a comedy.

31. *Harry Woodward*—He acted the role of Capt. Absolute.
Dunstal—He represented David.

32. *Quick*—Acted Bob Acres.
Ned Shuter—The actor who played Sir Anthony Absolute.

33. *Barsanti*—Miss Barsanti who played the romantically sad part of Lydia Languish.

34. *Mrs. Green*—She acted the famous part of Mrs. Malaprop.
What Sheridan wants to say is that if Sentimental Comedy is allowed to have her way, all the famous characters in his gay comedy would have to behave differently and their excellent comic roles would be marred. For example, Sir Anthony Absolute, while in his usual temper, might break the head of his servant or Bob Acres might be prosecuted and sent to prison for challenging

Ensign Beverley in a duel. Similarly Sir Anthony Absolute might be knocked down for his interference in the duel with tragic results. The worst of all these would be to see Lydia Languish stabbing herself in a fit of melancholy or poisoning Mrs. Malaprope for her opposition to her romantic love. What would be this comedy like if all the above changes were effected in *The Rivals* ?

35. *Dire encroachments*—Severe intrusions. Comedy taking up the qualities of tragedy with fatal results.

36. *Demand.........rhyme*—Both the professional critics and poets are requested to undertake the checking of comedy from encroaching into the field of tragedy.

37. *Can our.........holy laws*—Does real comedy with light-hearted scenes strengthen the moral and religious laws ? It neither does, nor should do.

38. *Such puny.........the cause*—If such a weakling as the goddess of comedy is to patronize the cause of morality and religion, the cause would rather suffer than gain.

39. *Fair Virtue.........to ask*—Virtue does not depend upon the weak help of comedy for its case.

40. *Moral Truth .....mask*—Similarly the moral truths do not require their disguised propagation through comedy.

41. *For here*—Pointing to the figure of tragedy.

Their favourite—The favourite of morality, virtue and truth *i.e.* the tragedy.

Brow severe—Stern face.

42. *Youth's respect and Pity's tear*—Tragedy expects respect from youth and tears from a pitiful heart.

43. *When oppressed.........creates*—When in a tragedy the virtues represented in the hero create many enemies of him.

44. *Can point.........she hates*—Tragedy can bring a dagger on to the wicked characters. Tragedy has an opportunity. *Poniard*—Dagger.

ACT I. Scene I

Stage Directions : *Bath*—The famous town in Somersetshire, known for its fashions and health-giving waters. It achieved its importance from Beau Nash, master of ceremonies therefor over fifty years and John Wood, who was responsible for some finest pieces of architecture there. Sheridan himself lived at Bath for a long time and married a romantic girl of the town.

Coachman—The eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries were notable for their stage-coaches and their singular coachmen. He was such a popular figure that he appears and reappears in all kinds of literature of the times. Here Thomas is the coachman in the service of Sir Anthony Absolute, who has unexpectedly come to town.

Fag—is the servant of Capt. Absolute and is as witty as the higher characters. It was a tradition in classical comedies to provide the hero with such a servant. Fag here unexpectedly meets his colleague Thomas and hence his surprise.

Line 3. *Odds life*—An oath common in the 18th century literature. The word *odds* stands for *God*. During the time of James I the word '*God*' was legally banned to be pronounced on the stage. Hence while in oaths, it was changed to odds.

Give us your hand—A fashionable servant of a fashionable master in a fashionable town. Hence his effort at copying the genteel manners. He uses the word 'us' for 'me' as in polite society.

5. *Excuse my glove*—The manners provided to shake hands with gloves taken off Fag is no less than Thomas in affecting manners.

Devilish glad—Very glad. Again a common mannerism.
Prince of Charioteers—This is how Nestor is addressed in Homer's *Iliad*. Fag uses it for Thomas. It is commonly not expected of a servant to have read the classics ; so he must be presumed to have learnt it from his master.

8. *As hearty*—As happy and cheerful as one can hope.
The deuce – Literally the devil. A common expression used as an oath.

Master—Sir Anthony Absolute, whose coachman Thomas is.
Madam Julia—Julia Melville, living under the guardianship of Sir Anthony and the betrothed of Faulkland.

Harry—Sir Anthony's servant.

Mrs. Kate—Another servant.

10. *Postillion*—One who rides the near horse of the leaders, or near horse when one pair only is used and there is no driver on box.

Be all come—Have all come (*slang*).

12. *Another fit of the gout*—Sir Anthony suffers from gout and hence as afraid of its sudden fit any time. His characteristic of prompt decision and its hasty execution is hinted here for the benefit of the audience. His name also signifies the same. It also explains Thomas's sudden appearance at Bath.

13. *To gi't the slip*—To give it (gout) a slip ; to be saved from another coming of gout. The mineral waters of Bath were reputed to have the capacity to cure the gout, a fashionable malady of the idle gentlemen.

14. *And whip*—The sudden departure for Bath was therefore the decision of the master. The whip symbolizes the carriage getting ready at once.

Off at an hour's warning—Indicates the hasty nature of Sir Anthony.

15-16. *Hasty in.........Absolute*—Fag corroborates the estimate of Sir Anthony's character made by Thomas. It is this predominant quality of Sir Anthony which would make him a more suitable character for a comedy of humours.

17. *Young master*—Capt. Absolute, the master of Fag. Having told his news Thomas is naturally to know Fag's.

18. *Odd* !—God !

Stare to see—Very much surprised to see.

19. *I do not serve Capt. Absolute now*—So said because since coming to Bath, Capt. Absolute has changed his name to Ensign Beverley. He did so to satisfy the romantic whim of Lydia Languish whom he was courting and who would love an 'Ensign' rather than a 'general'. The intelligent Fag deliberately mystifies Thomas, but soon gives out the mystery.

21. *Ensign*—Sub-lieutenant, formerly a commissioned officer of the lowest grade in the infantry. So called because he was required to carry the 'ensign' or the standard of the infantry.

22. *Changed for the better*—Changed the old master Capt. Absolute for a better one *i.e.* Ensign Beverley.

24. *I have not changed*—He further stupefies Thomas.

28-29. Capt. Absolute and Ensign Beverley—Treated as rivals in the play. The fact provides much fun and irony.

30. *The devil they are*—By the devil, are they really so ?

31-32. Fag humorously remarks that his master can well be split into two halves. The first half is that of Ensign Beverley which is now on guard, *i.e.*, on duty in making love to Lydia Languish while the other half is that of Capt. Absolute which is off duty and hence has nothing to do with Fag presently.

34. *So, So* !—Is it so ?

Freak I warrant—I am sure it is an example of your master's caprice.

36. *Trusted you*—Shown my faith in you by divulging to you my secrets. Naturally, I expect you to tell me your secrets.

37. *You will be a secret*—You will keep it a secret.

38. *As a coach-horse*—Slang, commonly used by coachmen.

The horse does not speak and so cannot divulge secrets. Thomas promises to remain as mum as his horse.

39. *Love*—Further exposition of the plot continues. Love, it is being informed, is the theme of the play as it should be in a comedy. Love personified is god of Love.

40. *As you may get read to you*—As you would know it someone had read the story to you. Fag hints that he is superior to his fellow-servant in learning.

41. *Masquerader . . . . . . Jupiter*—Masquerade is a masked ball, a dance with masks on the face. Masquerader, therefore, is one in disguise. Fag tries to explain that lovers have liked to pursue their objects of love in disguise since the chief of the gods himself did the same as referred in the classical legends. Jupiter is Zeus, the chief of the gods in classical mythology, credited with pursuing various nymphs and earthly beauties to win their love. All the while he put himself in various disguises. He charmed the nymph Danae, mother, of Perseus, by appearing to her as a shower of gold ; took the guise of a bull to be near Europa, the daughter of the Phoenician king, and when encouraged by his tameness she mounted on his back, ran off with her. Similarly he swept off Antiope, as a satyr and Leda, the mother of Helen, as a swan. Here Capt. Absolute has put on the disguise of Ensign Beverley to attract Lydia and is thus only furthering the traditions of classical heroes and gods.

42. *A lady in the case*—Some love affair.

43. *Pass*—Wants to be known as.

44. *Shamm'd*—Pretended to be.

45. *Hark'ee*—Hark ye. Listen.

47. *Singular taste*—Strange aptitude.

48. *Half—pay ensign*—A junior officer receiving only half pay.

49-50. *A baronet . . . . . a year*—Owning a hereditary title of a 'baronet' and with an income worth £3000 a year.

Fag's speech indicates the romantic whims of Lydia Languish, who being rich herself, thinks it unromantic to

love a highly placed man like a general. Her romantic vanity would be tickled if she allows a poor man to court her. Hence Fag's master passes only for an ensign.

51. *Odd taste*—Peculiar temperament.

52. *The stuff*—Money.

53. *Stocks* —"In 1751 a great variety of loans to the government had been consolidated into a single stock at a uniform rate of interest. They are now known as 'consols'." (Balston). Fag means that Lydia is very rich indeed.

54. *Zounds*—God's wounds! Another common oath like 'odds life'.

National debt—All the sum that the country's government owes. Fag is obviously trying to indicate Lydia's richness through this exaggerated statement.

55. *Lap-dog*—A very small dog that could be easily taken in the lap. To keep lap-dogs was a favourite fashion among the rich ladies of the eighteenth century society. Refer to the description of this society in Pope's 'Rape of the Lock,' the heroine of which is Belinda.

56. *Out of gold*—Out of a golden pot.

57. *Thread papers*—"Strips of paper folded in creases so as to form different divisions for different skeins of thread, the paper so folded forming a long and narrow strip" (Balston). She was so rich that she did not care for bank-notes being spoilt in rolling up silk.
Bank-notes—Banker's promissory notes.

58. *Faith*—In faith. Indeed. An oath.

I warrant—I am sure.

58-59. *Set of thousands*—The remark has been interpreted differently by the critics. Balston thinks "it may mean thousands of young men in love with her; the coachman suggests, as an impediment to Capt. Absolute's suit, that he is only one of thousands who run after her". Nettleton thinks that a coachman might naturally refer to "a set of six horses worth thousands of pounds". While looking to the context it may also mean that Lydia possesses a set of stocks worth thousands of pounds.

59. *Draw kindly with*—Behave favourably to.

61. *As fond as pigeons*—As loving as a pair of doves is proverbially said to be.

63. *Lydia Languish*—The heroine of the play. He surname Languish is very suggestive of her character. She languishes in love and luxury, affecting sentimental tenderness.

63-64. *Old tough aunt*—An aunt difficult to handle or to please. She is Mrs. Malaprop, whose ward Lydia is. She later proves worthy of Fag's compliments.

66. *Gloucestershire*—In the west of England.

67-68. *Harnessed together in matrimony*—United in marriage.

68-69. *What kind . . . . . . Bath:* Like a clever dramatist Sheridan has so far gone through full exposition of characters and situations. He has already acquainted us with the main qualities and relationships of Sir Anthony Absolute, Capt. Absolute, Lydia Languish and Mrs. Malaprop. He now gives some information about the place where his characters are moving about.

69. *A deal of it*—A good deal of it.

70. *Mort*—A dialect word meaning quantity. Thomas wants to know whether Bath is a place where one can enjoy himself much.

72. *Lounge*—Place to stay idling.
Pump-room—Beau Nash, the man who made Bath what it was, got these centres built known as pump-rooms. There was a room in these centres wherein the mineral waters from the springs were pumped for the luxury bath of the rich that went there for this very purpose.

73. *My master nor I*—Hinting that he is no less than his master.

74. *Saunter*—To walk leisurely.
Parades—Public places for walk.

75. *Billiards*—In this game there is a big table covered with soft cloth and the players have long rods with which they hit small smooth balls on the table. It is a game of the rich played since very old times.

76. *Regular hours*—The same dull routine day by day.
Stupefy—Bore ; make dull.

Beau Nash, the king of Bath had enforced such a regularity in the routine of the fashionable society of Bath that even Royalty was not allowed to break the rules.

76-77. *Not a fiddle . . . . eleven*—Neither the fiddle (a musical instrument) nor the game of cards could be enjoyed after eleven for Beau Nash had strictly prohibited all amusements after eleven.

77. *Mr. Faulkland's Gentleman*—The personal servant of Faulkland. Another character, Faulkland, is thus cleverly introduced and the information of the sub-plot is divulged. Faulkland is the friend of Capt. Absolute and is contrasted with him whereas Julia, the heroine of the sub-plot, is contrasted with Lydia Languish. Faulkland-Julia episode has been purposely brought to ridicule the Sentimental Comedy, although it ironically becomes the weakest point in the play bringing in the sentimental vein which it professes to burlesque.

78. *I keep it up*—I am going on with it.

80. *Du Peigne*—This is a French name. As Balston indicates, it was thought fashionable to keep a French valet.

You must polish—As earlier hinted, Fag does not let go any opportunity to lecture Thomas on fashions and manners, thus eastablishing his superiority over him. So he wants Thomas to be a little more elegant in his appearance.

83. *How now—this Wig*—Wig was much in fashion once but as Fag indicates the fashion to wear wigs was dying out in the high society ; so he thinks Thomas is not quite up-to-date in his dress.

84. *Whips*—Coach-drivers.

85. *Of any degree of ton*—Ton means fashion as in Colman's *Jealous Wife*. "The chief aim of Bon Ton is to render Persons of Family different from the Vulgar, for whom indeed Nature serves very well". *Of any degree of ton* would mean, one who is at all fashionable.

86. *More's the pity*—To Thomas it is pitiable that they do

not wear wigs now for he supports the older fashions. As stated earlier about other characters, there are sets of contrasted characters in the play. Fag and Thomas make such a pair.

87. *Took to their hair*—Had given up wearing wigs, *i.e.* false hair and had started wearing their own hair.

88. *How it would go next*—What will come? Wigs might altogether disappear. So far its disappearance was referred in case of doctors and lawyers only.

89. *Odd rabbit it*—God rot it. An oath.

89. *Got foot*—Got a secure foothold.

88. *Bar*—Among the lawyers. (Members of the Bar).

90. *Mount to the Box*—It would reach the coachmen also. Box is coachman's seat. If barristers had given up wearing wigs, coachmen would follow suit.

90-91. *Out of character*—Against the nature of profession.

95. *Bless you*—God bless you. An oath.

95. *They professions*—Those professions.

96. *All of a mind*—In agreement.

96. *Thoff*—Though.

97. *The exciseman*—Officer-in-charge of collecting duty on manufactured goods.

Jack Gauge—The name is meaningful for an exciseman has to gauge (measure) things in order to assess the correct amount of duty.

Has taken carrots—Taken to wearing his own natural red (carrot-like) hair.

98. *Farrier*—One who shoes the horses.

99. *Bob*—Short-curled wig.

College—Persons organised into an association because of their common functions, common interests and common rights.

99-100. *With their own heads*—Without wigs.

101. *Hold*—Stop speaking.

102. *Mark*—Look ; notice.

103. *Zooks*—An interjection us d for the expression of surprise.

The captain—Capt. Absolute.

The lady—Lydia Languish, whom he loves.

105. *Madam Lucy*—The maid-servant of Lydia Languish. She plays an important role as a go-between, in scene II.

107. *After him*—Hurry up behind.

The news—Of the arrival of his father, Sir Anthony Absolute.

108. *He's giving her money*—Lucy is clever enough to extract money from all the characters who foolishly believe in her. So is Capt. Absolute bribing her to carry his letter to Lydia.

111. *Gyde's Porch*—The entrance to the Lower Rooms kept by one Mr. Gyde. It was the lower portion of an Assembly House built by the famous architect Thomas Harrison under the directions of Beau Nash.

ACT I. Scene II

(S.D.) *From a message*—From an errand.

1. *Traversed*—Travelled.

2. *In search of it*—In search of books. This was her errand from which she has just returned.

3. *Circulating library*—For small subscriptions, books could be had, read and returned to these libraries. These were very popular in Bath. One such library was Bull's Circulating Library which was opposite Gyde's Porch, referred to at the end of Scene I. Lucy had come out of this library when Capt. Absolute met her. The sentimental heroine used to get all her romances, novels etc. from here.

4-5 *'The Reward of Constancy'*—These books asked for by Lydia were the popular romances of the dav. Some of these were the translations from the French. *The Reward of Constancy* has been identified by Balston with "*Female Constancy*, or the *History of Miss Arabella* Waldegrave."

7. *'The Fatal Connexion'*—The author of which was Miss Fogasty. Published 1773.

9. *'The Mistakes of the Heart'*—It was a translation from the French. The book was in the form of memoirs and the author Treysac. Published 1773.

10. *Mr. Bull*—The name of a bookseller whose shop was opposite Gyde's Porch, referred above.

11. *Miss Sukey Saunter*—All the names given by Lucy are significant. The surname here suggests the character of the lady.

12. *Heigh-ho*—An exclamation indicating extreme impatience. The romantic heroine has got to feign all sorts of emotions.

'The Delicate Distress'—Written by Elizabeth Griffith.

14. *'The Memoirs of Lady Woodford'*—It was reviewed in the *Monthly Review* in 1771.

16. *Mr. Frederick's*—From the shop of Mr. Frederick, the bookseller of Bath.

17. *Lady Slattern Lounger*—The name is again suggestive of the character of the lady.

18. *Dog's-ear'd*—Turned down the corners of the book.
It wa'n't....read—It had become unworthy of being read by a civilized person.

21. *Has been before me*—Has got a book to read before I could get it. The fact puts in her a slight of humiliation.
She has...thumb—She is referring to Lady Slattern's habit of turning the corners of books. The sting, however, is in remarking that her thumbs are observant and not her eyes as they could be. Did she read with her nails ?

22-23 *Cherishes......notes*—Uses her long pointed nails for writing notes in the margin of a book. Long and pointed nails were a fashion with the ladies ; the fashion has yet not died out.

26. *The Gordian knot*—Written by Richard Griffith, the husband of Elizabeth Griffith. The book was published in 1773.
Peregrine Pickle ; The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality; Humphrey Clinker—The novels by Tobias Smollett, counted among the four great novelists of the eighteenth century. The book number two is only a chapter in *'Peregrine Pickle.'*

27. *"The Tears of Sensibility"*—John Murdoch's translation of a French book.

30. *'The Sentimental Journey'*—Written by Laurence Sterne, also among the four great novelists of the century.

31. *By the glass*—Near the mirror.

33. *The great one*—The bigger one.
'The Whole Duty of Man'—The author of which is thought to have been Dr. Allestree, once the Provost of Eton. It was published in 1659 and ran into forty editions in two hundred years.

34. *Where I press a few blonds*—Pressing the lace between the pages of the book to straighten it out. Could she put these books to a better use ? *Blonds*—Laces.

35. *Sal Volatile*—A solution of ammonium carbonate utilized as a restorative in fainting.

36. *Is it in a blue cover ?*—After all Lucy is a servant and is not informed about the fashionable things as her mistress is. She takes *Sal Volatile* to be the name of some book.

37. *Simpleton*—A stupid fool.

38. *The drops*—(Slang). The smelling salt.

39. Hold—Stop.

Here's someone coming—The sentimental middle class thought it was advisable for the young ladies, to read books only about morals, religion and the like. It would have been monstrous to find them reading novels or romances. The elders of the household were vigilant to see their wards reading pious books only. Lydia pretends to be reading a pious book when her guardian Mrs. Malaprop later enters her room. Lydia's remark is only a caution lest Mrs Malaprop be coming and she be caught reading a novel.

42. *Lud*—Lord.

45. *This happiness*—Of meeting Julia.

47. *You were denied to me*—You were not allowed to be seen by me. Obviously Mrs. Malaprop must have been doing that.

49. *A thousand things*—Lydia, the romantic heroine, has to feign excess in everything. She is impatient to divulge her secret love with Ensign Beverley to her confidante Julia.

50. *Conjured you*—Brought you by magic.

52. *Within this hour*—Not even an hour before.

54. *As soon as he is dress'd*—Since he was in the riding dress, he had to change before he could call on Mrs. Malaprop. It would have been unfashionable to be seen in the riding dress.

55. *Interrupted*—Checked by the arrival of the elders from having a heart-to-heart talk.

56. *Distress*—Troubles. She means her tiff with Beverley and the discovery of her affair with him.

56-57. *Gentle nature......me*—Julia is both gentle and wise as is borne out by her part later in the play.

59. *Connection*—Dealing; developments.
Beverley—Capt. Absolute. None of the two friends knows the reality of the man yet. This fact is responsible for much of the complication in the plot. Concealed identity was a common device with the novelists and the playwrights to weave a complicated plot.

I have lost him—Since they had a tiff, Mrs. Malaprop has discovered their love affair and Beverley has not been able to see Lydia.

60. *Intercourse*—Dealings with each other.
A note she intercepted—Mrs. Malaprop came in possession of Lydia's letter from Lucy whom she had bribed.

61. *Confined*—Compelled to stay within doors. That is why she had earlier not allowed Julia to see her.

63. *A tall Irish baronet*—Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

64. *Rout*—Archaic for a large evening party.

65. *You jest*—It is natural for Julia to disbelieve Lydia because an old woman like Mrs. Malaprop is past the age of falling in love.

66. *Upon my word*—Truly ; believe me.

67. *Under a feigned name*—Mrs. Malaprop has assumed the name Delia in correspondence with Sir Lucius, who thinks he is getting letters from a young woman. The misunderstanding leads to many comic situations.

68. *Until she chooses to be known*—She discloses herself only in Act V, Scene III, and provokes laughter and embarrassment.

69. *Delia or Celia.*—Fashionable stock names of the age. The lovers used them commonly to conceal the real names of their beloveds.

70-71. *She is more indulgent*—She should be more sympathetic to her niece's love affair being in love herself.

72. *Quite the contrary*—Mrs. Malaprop is opposed to Lydia's affair.

73. *Frailty*—Weakness. For Sir Lucius.

74. *Another plague*—Another trouble.
Odious—Hateworthy.

75. *Acres*—Bob Acres, the friend of Capt. Absolute. She disliked him but Mrs. Malaprop wanted her to marry him.
To be in Bath to-day—All the characters are somehow to be brought in Bath to keep the unity of time and place.

75-76. *I protest . . . . . .spirits*—I declare with emphasis that Bob Acres might be brought to worry me so that all my gay spirits would be gone.

77. *Hope for the best*—As Julia herself does in her affairs with Faulkland. The only recipe in trouble is hope.

78. His *interest with*—His influence on.

81. *Made the discovery*—Intercepted my letter to Beverley and thus came to know of my love with him.

82. *To make it up*—To be on happy terms with him again. It was a deliberately sought quarrel about not even a trifle.

84. *Nothing at all*—Even when Beverley had given no offence, Lydia quarrelled with him simply for the sake of bringing some thrill and suspense in love; otherwise love would be dull and unromantic. It also indicates how the activities of the cultured folk centred round idle caprices, and things of no importance. Life had nothing more to be serious about, than loving and that too in a foolish manner like that of Lydia who wrote a false-named letter to herself and thus picked up a quarrel.

85. *As often as we had been together*—Since our love-affair started.

87. *Give me an opportunity*—To experience the thrill of a quarrel with him.

88. *Letter to myself*—Under a false name she herself wrote a letter addressing herself.

89. *Paying his addresses*—Making love. Courting.

91. *Charged him. . . . . .falsehood*—Accused him that he was unfaithful in love to me.

92. *Passion*—Anger.

93. *Depart so*—Leave you in this unhappy manner.

95. *The matter*—Her love affair with Beverley.

96. *Three days and a half*—Even the period of teasing the lover was seriously thought out and decided beforehand. Great solemnity in love indeed !

98. *Deserving and sincere*—Worthy and faithful.

100-101. *He is but. : . . . .pounds*—Julia is not able to reconcile herself to the fact that such a wealthy girl like Lydia should love a poor ensign.

103. *Till of age*—till she was no more a minor, *i.e.*, till she attained the age of twenty-one.

103-105. *That is what. . . . . . . penalty*—She had decided to disobey her aunt and marry Beverley because she would lose her money thus. The desire behind the remark is a sentimental nonsense of the extreme type. She thinks love should have nothing to do with money. That is why being rich she loves a poor man. If for the sake of her love she has to lose her moneyshe would do it and not wait till she is twentyone, to get her money. What could be more foolish ?

106. *The alternative*—If her lover wanted to wait for the marriage till she became of age and got her money, she would not love such a man.

107. *Caprice*—Whim.

108. *Tax*—Blame.

108-109. *I thought. . . . . .her to it*—I thought that your lover Faulkland's caprices would have made you tolerant of capricious people. When even Julia's lover is so, why should she blame Lydia ? Faukland, as the later scenes in the play show, was a very whimsical lover, who loved passionately but jealously, thinking that Julia did not love him as much as he did her, or as she ought to.

110. *Even his faults*—Julia speaks truth when she says that she does not like even Faulkland's caprices.

111. *Apropos*—(French) To the purpose. The name Malaprop has been formed with this word. Malaprop=Mal+a+propose=Ill+to+purpose *i.e.* not to the purpose or inappropriate. The most obvious quality of Mrs. Malaprop is her inappropriate use of words, which is the meaning given to the word 'Malapropesin' in the dictionary. She has made herself immortal by giving this new word to the language.

111. *Sent to him*—Sent for him. Informed him of your arrival.

115. *You are your own mistress*—You are free to behave as you like, even though you are still under the guardianship of an elderly man, Sir Anthony. In contrast to her, Lydia has been 'confined'.

116. *Protection*—Guardianship.

119. *Assuming....husband*—Marrying you.
Suffer—Allow.

120. *Imperious*—Dominant. That was the whim of Faulkland. He wanted all the love from Julia, yet himself postponed the marriage. Lydia would imagine herself 'domineering' rather than let her lover be so.

121. *Contracted*—Betrothed in marriage.

122-123. *Consequent embarrassments*—Later unhappy things.

124. *Ardent*—Intense ; keen.

125. *Trifle on*—Behave non-seriously.

127. *Captious*—One who finds faults with others.
Without dissembling—To show what one is not, is to dissemble. Faulkland is without it, *i.e.*, he is honest in finding faults with Julia.

128. *Fretful*—Complaining.
Rudeness—Uncivility. Lack of politeness in manners.

128. *Fopperies of love*—Show and vanity of love.

129. *Negligent*—Careless.

130. *Unhackneyed*—Inexperienced. Ignorant.

131. *Ardent*—Warm.

Engrosses—Covers ; keeps bound.

133. *In unison with*—Harmoniously with ; reciprocal to.

134. *Calls for this full return*—Wants the fullest return of love from the mistress.

134—136. *His humility......him to it*—He is so humble that he underestimates his virtues that make him worthy of an equal return of love as his right.

138. *This temper*—Faulkland's feeling that Julia does not love him to the full.

Own—Confess.

139—141. *I have learned......attachment*—I think, I am indebted to him because his fault of suspecting me of not loving him enough also arises out of his warmest love for me. She is indulgent to Faulkland's fault of suspecting her love. Contrary to this she has earlier told Lydia that she does not love even his faults.

Sheridan perhaps did not notice the slip because he meant Julia to be contrasted with Lydia's absurdities. Julia in his speech has been shown wise and tolerant, while Lydia is not so.

143. *Candidly*—Clearly.

143-144. *Had he never......you are*—Had you been not saved from drowning by Faulkland but by some one else, would you even then have loved him equally well? Julia's attachment to Faulkland owed much to her gratitude. To make the hero and the heroine fall in love with each other, this was a stock situation utilized by the novelists and the playwrights—the saving of the heroine's life by the hero.

145. *The rude blast*—The rough storm. It overturned the boat of a fair maiden like Julia ; hence also rude.

146. *A prosperous gale of love to him*—The same blast proved to be fortunate for Faulkland for it won him the love of Julia.

149. *Preserved me*—Saved my life.

150. *That alone......sufficient*—Being saved from death was such an obligation that, Julia thinks, it was enough to extract from her all her love.

151. *Water-spaniel*—A dog that can swim well and is trained to save the drowning people.

152. *Done as much*—Saved Julia's life.

152-153. *I should......could swim*—Lydia is trying to put Julia down. She twists the fact of Faulkland saving Julia's life to mere Faulkland's capability to swim. Julia's thesis, that love can be born out of gratitude, goes against her romantic notions and so she contradicts Julia's statement.

154. *Too inconsiderate*—Very thoughtless, for you don't care for other's feelings.

155. *I do but jest*—I am only joking.
What's here—Who is here ? Who is coming ?

158. *Do you watch*—You should keep watch.

160. *Paying my respects*—Visit her and convey to her my regards.

162. *Treat me*—Amuse me.

163-165.—*So ingeniously......mispronounced*—Julia in these words tells her about the real trait for which Mrs. Malaprop is distinguished. Her weakness is not that she pronounces the words wrongly, but that, while succumbing to her vanity she wants to look pompous and full of authority ; so she selects big words and not knowing their correct use, misapplies them. The literal meaning of the word Malaprop has earlier been explained. See line 111 in this very scene.

165. *O Lud*—O Lord ; O God.

166. *Coz*—Cousin.
Adieu—Good-bye.

167. *To send to*—To write to.

168. *There......staircase*—Lydia points out to Julia another

way out so that she may not have to come across Sir Anthony and Mrs. Malaprop.

170. *Hide these books*—The novels and romances brought by Lucy have to be hidden from the view of the callers and in their place moral and religious books are to be displayed on the table, bed, etc. Lydia selects ingeniously the places to conceal the books ; *e.g.* under the toilet, behind the bolster etc.

171. *Fling*—Throw.

172. *Closet*—Cupboard.

173. *The Innocent Adultery*—Translated by Paul Scarron from a French novel. It is also the sub-title of Southerne's tragedy "*The Fatal Marriage.*"

173. *The whole Duty of Man*—Written by Dr. Allestree who was once Provost of Eton. She wants to thrust '*The Innocent Adultery*' into its pages so as to be concealed from view. Ironically it may mean that innocent adultery might become a part of man's duty.

174. '*Lord Aimworth*'—was a novel written in the form of letters. It ran into three volumes.

Cram—put into.

Ovid—The most celebrated Roman poet of the first century A.D. His time was from B.C. 43 to 17 A.D. He was very popular with the young people for he has written many love-stories. One of such tales is '*The Art of Love.*' Lydia might have been reading one of Ovid's translated books.

175. *Bolster*—Pillow.
'*The man of Feeling*'—A novel written by Henry Mackenzie (1745—1831) and published in 1771.

176. *So, so*—Like this.

'*Mrs. Chapone*'—A contemporary author who wrote '*Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*' (1773). These letters give elaborate directions on the method of the education of girls. Almost all the guardians would have liked

their wards reading it. Hence Lydia wants it to be displayed.

177. *In sight*—In a manner that it catches the eye.

Fordyce's Sermons—Dr. James Fordyce (1720–1796) wrote '*Sermous to Young Women*' in 1765. This book was also very popular as all such books were in that age of hypocrisy.

178. *Burn it*—Shows impatience and hurry.
Hair-dresser—Ladies of fashion engaged specialists to do their hair.

Torn away—For curling her hair she tore the pages from this valuable book. It shows how much Lydia cared for this book.

179. *Proper Pride*—the name of a character in the book.

180. *Sobriety*—The name of another chapter.

Never mind—Because she knows none would bother to touch the book, only it should be displayed there in whatever condition it might be.

Fling me—Give to me.

181. *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*—He wrote many letters to his soon to teach him worldly prudence and the way to success. The book was very popular.

Now for 'em—Now I am ready to receive Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony.

182. *Deliberate Simpleton*—A girl who behaves foolishly of her own accord. Although no one would like to appear foolish deliberately, Mrs. Malaprop thinks differently, or it might be that she is using the words without knowing what they mean.

183. *Lavish herself*—Waste herself. Give herself away unwisely.

184. *A fellow not worth a shilling*—Ensign Beverley, the half-pay ensign. Mark the irony in words which are being spoken in the presence of Capt. Absolute's father himself.

186-187. *I don't know . . . . woman*—One of Mrs. Malaprop's

peculiar principles, what business has a young woman to think? Note also how she cuts her niece's speech short. *Does not become*—Is not suitable for. Her pet phrase.

188. *This fellow*—Ensign Beverley.

191-92. *Our memories . . . . will*—The memory does not obey our desires. We don't remember or forget according to our wishes.

193. *But I say it is*—She must oppose what Lydia says or else how would she appear authoritative.

194. *If a person . . . . about it*—If a person determines to do it and does it seriously and sincerely.

195–97. I'*m sure . . . . so to do*—The allusion to her dead husband shows how ridiculously foolish Mrs. Malaprop is.

197. *Violent memories*—Strong attachments.

199-200. *She won't . . . . not*—She would not try to remember whom she is ordered to forget. The dictatorial undercurrent of thought quite becomes Sir Anthony's name—Absolute.

200. *This comes of her reading*—Sir Anthony thinks that Lydia has been disobeying her aunt simply because she is an educated woman. Till the eighteenth century it was not thought proper to educate the girls. It was so in India also till a few decades ago. Sir Anthony being an old man, considered the old-fashioned things better than the new ideas spreading in his times. Actually the eighteenth century saw an immense development in women's education.

201. *What crime*—Lydia has courage to be defiant and angry.

204. *The matter*—The accusation of disobedience.

I have proof—The proof is the letter she had intercepted by bribing Lucy.

206. *Your friends*—Your well-wishers She means herself, who must be accepted as Lydia's well-wisher.

207. *Plainly*—Frankly.

208. *Preference for any one else*—She means if she had not made her own choice.

The choice you have made—As indicated above, Mrs. Malaprop wanted her for to marry Bob Acres.

209. *My aversion*—My object of hate.

210-11. *What business . . . . . aversion*—Mrs. Malaprop would never like that young inexperienced women should be free to love whom they liked and marrv the object of their choice. An idea common even to-day, but strongly resented by the young.

213. *Wear off*—Wither away. Go out of the mind.

Matrimony—Matters of marriage.

215. *Black-a-moor*—Negro.

216. *Sensible*—Aware.

What a wife—How good a wife.

217. *Pleased Heaven . . . .him*—When God was kind enough to release her, with her husband's early death. The death of her husband she calls 'a release'. How good a wife, indeed !

217-18. *'Tis unknown. . . .I shed*—She means, no person could guess how much she wept for him. It may also mean—and more correctly so—that she did not shed any tears at all ; so how should one be expected to know about her tears ?

219. *Another choice*—Another husband than Bob Acres. How comfortabyl she thinks one can change husbands. The choice she is hinting at is Capt. Absolute.

221-22. *Could I . . . . my words*—If I am insincere to my thoughts in giving a false promise, my action would go against it and thus belie the promise. She outright rejects Mrs. Malaprop's offer without caring to know who the choice is. A romantic heroine could not do otherwise.

223. *Takes yourself to your room*—Asking her to get out. The disobedience is too much to be borne before a visitor.

224. *Ill-humours*—Bad whims.

225. *Willingly . . . . worse*—She agrees to willingly for go the change would be better than Mrs. Malaprop's company. Extreme disobedience and open defiance. What thrills and extreme satisfaction she must have got in doing it!

227. *Intricate hussy*—Obstinate and impertiment girl. Hussy is a pert girl or a woman of light character.

231. *Black art*—Black magic. A hate-worthy practice.

230-31. *I'd as soon . . . . alphabet*—Teaching of the alphabet is as bad to him as that of the black art. Extreme abhorrence of girl's education to be sure!

235. *Your niece's maid*—Lucy, who was coming out of Bull's library perhaps.

236. *Half-bound volumes*—The sides and corners were bound in leather and the covers were of marbled paper.

237. *Marble covers*—Covers of marble colour.

238. *How full of duty*—An ironical remark. He really means how undutiful.

Her mistress—Lucy's mistress—Lydia.

239. *Those are vile places*—She means the circulating libraries.

240. *A circulating . . . . . . .knowledge*—A library, because it circulates its books all through the year is said to be evergreen like the Tree of Knowledge referred in the Bible. It spreads diabolical knowledge, *i.e.*, devilish or evil ideas among the subscribers. The Tree of knowledge also did the same as referred in the Genesis in the Bible. Novels and romances are certainly wicked knowledge for Sir Authony.

241-42. *It blossoms through the year*—It supplies its books throughout the year. Evergreen.

242. *Depend upon it*—Believe it.

243. *Handling the leaves*—Since books have been compared to the Tree of knowledge the word 'leaves' is applicable on both sides. Thus it means those who read these books.

243-44. *Long for the fruits at last*—Once she has read about the wicked things in these books she might desire to

put them in practice. Lydia actually does so. The guardian's fears are not altogether unfounded.

245. *Fie, fie*—An expression of hate.

247. *In moderation*—Having a moderate estimate. On an average.

248. *What would......know*—What sort of education should be given to a girl?

252. *Meddle with*—Have anything to do with, *i.e.* to learn.

253. *Hebrew*—The language of the Jews in very old times.

Simony—The word comes from Simon *i.e.* Magus who wanted to get the Holy Ghost. Hence it means a sin. Mrs. Malaprop thinks it to be some branch of knowledge.

255. *To handle*—To study.

263. *Should be misress of*—Should have command over (Orthograph—Spelling).

263—265. *That she might...usually do.*—While Mrs. Malaprop wants the spelling and pronunciation of her ward to be correct, she herself is not the mistress of the same art. An unconscious ironical criticism of herself is thus provided.

269. *Dispute*—Argue.

271. *You are......arguer*—You are a debater who is so polite and considerate that by using wrong words you give an opportunity to the other party to disprove your argument easily.

272. *Every third word......question*—Every third word you use, being a misuse of the word, shows that girl's education is a mere waste Mrs. Malaprop, however, being 'too wise' misses the sting in this argument.

273. *The more important point*—274. *My proposal*—Both hint at the earlier talks between them about marrying Lydia Languish to Capt. Absolute.

275. *None*—No objection.

No positive engagement—No definite arrangement to marry Lydia to Bob Acres.

277. *Better success*—Success in winning her over ; for Bob Acres had failed in the attempt. None of the three characters knows the irony that Beverley and Capt. Absolute are the same person.

279. *Not a syllable of this*—Not a word about this proposal of marriage.

280. *Have for......my head*—For sometime past I have been thinking over it.

281. *With his regiment*—The father is completely ignorant of his son's whereabouts. He does not know that he is in Bath. This is another example of dramatic irony.

283. *No objection on his side*—Mrs. Malaprop hopes that Capt. Absolute would not disagree to this proposal of marriage with Lydia.

284. *Les him object if he dare*—The authoritative assertion befits the character of Sir Anthony '*Absolute*'. He cannot even think of his son having the courage to disobey him.

285. *Jack*—The pet name of Capt. Absolute.
Demur—Raising objection.

286. *Frenzy*—Violent anger.
Directly—Immediately.
Process—Method ; manner.

288. *Knocked him down*—Beat him.
Grumbled—Complained.

200. *Proprest*—Most proper.
O'my conscience—Conscientiously speaking.

291. *Conciliating*—She might have been thinking that nothing mends the young people better than severe treatment.

293. *Discharge*—She would tell Acres that Lydia would not be married to him.

296. *I will......prudently*—I shall tackle the situation wisely and cleverly.

298. *Enforce this matter roundly*—Frankly compel her to the proposal of marriage as you desire it. Sir Anthony

does not forget to suggest the severest methods, for the purpose.

299. *Keep a tight hand*—Be strict and severe.
Clap—Shut in ; confine. Irony again for she has already been confined.

301. *Just to let . . . . dinner*—The severest kind of punishment for a grown-up person. It might, however, evoke rebellion and not submission. It is this type of behaviour that compels a young man to take even extremely foolish steps (as by Lydia) simply to feel the thrill of success against their cruel guardians.

302. *Come about*—Agree. Give consent to this proposal of marriage.

305. *Partiality*—Attachment ; love.

306. *Betrayed me*—Told my secret to Lydia. It was through Lucy that she has been carrying on correspondence with Sir Lucius.

Simpleton—Fool. Used for Lucy.

307. *I should have . . . . . . confess it*—If Lucy had told my secrets to Lydia I should have, by my cleverness, come to know of it by now.

308-9. *Had she been . . . . trusted her*—If she had been among the clever once I would not have reposed my trust in her. Dramatic irony again, for Lucy is one of the cleverest and has betrayed, not one, but all those that trusted her.

311-12. *You was out*—You were gone to fetch books for Lydia. She uses the word 'was' for 'were'. That shows her attainments.

314-15. *You never mentioned*—She wants to make sure that Lydia never mentioned Sir Lucius' affair to Lydia. The clever Lucy takes the hint at once and denies the charge.

316. *O Gemini*—O my stars ! An expression of surprise.

316. *I'd sooner . . . . out*—I would rather cut my tongue out than mention your secret to anyone.

317. *Your Simplicity be imposed on*—Let not others take advantage of your simple nature by extracting secrets out of you. Lucy is certainly not so 'simple'.

320. *Presently*—Soon. At once.

322. *Unless it . . . . to me*—Note Mrs. Malaprop's principles. Lucy had already told her the secret of Lydia's love with Beverley.

323. *Forfeit*—Lose.

324-25. *Your being . . . . . locality*—The fact that you are a fool will not be an excusably plea for your talkativeness, *i.e.* letting out my secret.

326. *My dear Simplicity*—Lucy is very happy that she is taken as a simpleton, whereas she is clever than all those around her. Simplicity is dear to her for it brings her money ; it is dear to others also because, they think, it would ensure the safety of their secrets with her.

327. *Respite*—Rest ; leave. Now when she is alone, there is no need to wear the mask of simplicity. Hence it is awarded temporary leave.

Altering her manner—Comes to her natural self. Now can Lucy be seen in her true colours.

328. *My station*—My position. Employed as maid-servants.

329. *Expert*—Efficient ; clever.

329. *Knowing in their trusts*—Clever in executing the work entrusted to them.

329—32 *Commend me . . . . silliness*—Let other maids appear as clever as the like but I would better keep up the show of being a fool. The disguise of stupidity is meant to cover her selfish interests.

330-31. *A pair of . . . . under it*—Under the garb of foolishness let my keen eyes observe the secrets of others and make money out of them.

331. *To what account*—To how much usefulness.

332. *Turned*—Used.

Lately—In the immediate past.

Looks at a paper—Wherefrom she reads out her account of earnings.

333. *Abetting*—Assisting (the offender).

Design—Plot or plan.

Running away with an ensign—We now know that Lydia had a plan for an elopement with Ensign Beverley. It was befitting for Lydia's romantic self. Sheridan himself eloped with his future wife Miss Linley. Elopements were quite common in the eighteenth century society.

334. *In money*—cash rewards.

Sundry times—On many occasions.

Twelve pound twelve—£12. 12 sh.

335. *Ruffles*—An ornamental frill of lace worn at opening of garment, especially about wrist, breast or neck.

336. *The said ensign*—Ensign Beverley.

337. *Guineas*—A guinea is equivalent to 21 sh. It is a gold coin.

About a quarter's pay—An ensign's pay of about a quarter of an year, *i.e.* three months.

338. *The young people*—Lydia Languish and her young lover Beverley.

339. *When I found . . . . discovered*—The height of her cleverness. She disclosed the secret when she knew it might be discovered soon and gained favour and money from Mrs. Malaprop. Thus she killed two birds with one stone. She made money and did not actually betray Lydia' s trust, for she told only what would have been otherwise found out.

340. *Padusoy*—A strong corded silk fabric, so named because it comes from Padua, and the French '*Soie*'.

341. *Divers*—Many ; several.

342. *A pair of buckles*—What we in Urdu call '*Baksua*'. A device to fasten belts.

343. *Crowns*—A coin worth 5 sh.

Pocket-pieces—Forged or damaged coins, kept in pockets to ward off evil spirits.

344. *Snuff-box*—A fashion of the times.

Well done, simplicity—A great achievement for a simpleton.

245. *Hibernian*—Irishman. She means Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

345-46. *Corresponding . . . . . niece*—Lucy kept Sir Lucius under the impression that he was exchanging love letters not with Mrs. Malaprop but with Lydia. This complication in the plot later on leads to many embarrassing situations and much fun at the cost of Sir Lucius and Mrs. Malaprop.

347. *Over-rich*—Very rich.

Delicacy—Refinement.

348-49. *Sacrifice. . . . fortunes*—Although Sir Lucius was very poor, he never was attracted by the mean thought of marrying Mrs. Malaprop and thus, by getting money, getting rid of his poverty. It is sarcastically said by Lucy.

ACT II. SCENE I

Lines 2-3. *You had sent . . . . see you*—Fag tells his master that he did not forget the formalities on behalf of the son to the father, when he met Sir Anthony. There is no wonder that the artificial manners of the age required even the son to enquire whether the father was at leisure to see the son.

5. *Elderly*—Nearing old age.

6. *He started back*—In astonishment.

7. *Rapt out*—(Rapped out). To utter abruptly or on the spur of the moment. (slang) The manner was natural for Sir Anthony.

Interjectural—Fag might have meant interjectional or parenthetical. This might also be taken as an example of Malapropism. Fag is no less keen than anyone else to show off. Hence the mistake.

7-8. *What the devil . . . . here*—What on earth was the reason that Cap. Absolute was away from his Military duties, enjoying himself at Bath. Since Sir Anthony was very sure, that he was away, his surprise is genuine and natural.

10. *I forget the precise lie*—I have forgotten the exact false excuse I gave to Sir Anthony. Like a sincere servant, Fag is ever ready to help his master in every possible manner.

11. *Depend on't*—Take it to be true.
He got no truth—The real reason, *i.e.* the love affair with Lydia, was not disclosed.

11-12. *With submission*—Respectfully I submit. Fag never forgets the formality and the etiquette.

13. *To fix*—To decide among ourselves.
What brought us to Bath—What excuse would you like to give to your father for your presence in Bath. Once they decide upon and give a common excuse, their lie might not be discovered.

14. *Lie a little consistently*—Give out the same lie.

Sir Anthony's servants were curious—As the coachman of Sir Anthony was in Act I, scene I. Fag has himself let the cat out of the bag but here, very innocently, he tells a lie to his master.

17. *Not a word*—A liar can hardly be trusted even when he poses faithfulness. Fag has given all the facts to Thomas already.

18. *Discreetest*—Most judicious and prudent. One who does not speak out at inopportune times.

19. *Whip*—Coachman.

20. *'Sdeath*—God's death. An oath.

You rascal—So he really is.

You have not trusted him—I hope you have not told, him the truth about stay in Bath.

21. *Not a syllable*—Nothing to speak of a word I have not told him even a syllable.

22. *Veracity*—Truthfulness.

Inquisitive—Desirous to know our secret.
Devilish sly—Very clever. As clever as the devil himself. Mark the irony. He *is* 'devilish sly' while he is telling the lie to his master.

23-25. *My master .... to recruit*—The short broken speech of Fag indicates that he is trying to concoct a convincing lie on the spur of the moment. He is naturally a little nervous.

24. *One says .... inferiors*—This is not, precisely speaking, a lie for a gentleman's private servant was definitely considered to be superior to a coachman, in status. That is

why Fag always addresses him as Thomas whereas Thomas calls him Mr. Fag.

25. *To recruit*—Sheridan has entrusted Fag with more than average intelligence. Here is an example of brilliant equivocation in the words 'to recruit'. It may mean (i) to enlist new soldiers to army (ii) To replenish or fill up deficiencies or (iii) To seek to recover health. Equivocation has always been a common device with the writers of comedy.

26. *Men, money or constitution*—The three things to recruit which Capt. Absolute might be taken to have come to Bath. They correspond with the three meanings of the word 'recruit' given above.

Constitution—Health.

26-27. *Is nothing to him*—He cares little for.

28. *Recruit will do*—The excuse appeals to Capt. Absolute and he agrees.

29. *Will do surprisingly*—Will do very well.

30. *Give the thing an air*—To give our lie a semblance of truth.

31. *Disbanded Chairman*—Chair carriers dismissed from service, *i.e.* unemployed. The rich idle persons preferred to be carried in covered chairs when going short distances. These chairs were fastened to two big projecting poles, the ends of which rested on the shoulders of four men called 'Chairmen'.

32. *Minority waiters*—It might either mean waiters of inferior rank or, as Balston explains it, "persons waiting for a government appointment, which, however, they despair of obtaining, as their party is in a minority in Parliament." *Billiard-marker*—The scorer. One who makes the score in billiards is known as a 'marker'.

33. *Blockhead*—A fool.

Never say......necessary—As Mrs. Malaprop took Lucy to be a simpleton, Capt. Absolute takes Fag to be a fool and asks him not to tell elaborate lies unnecessarily ; for thus they commit themselves to so many things and the defence behind an equivocation is nullified. Fag is

really happy that he is so successfully befooling his master.

34. *I beg pardon*—He must say so for he is going to contradict his master.

35. *A lie is nothing unless one supports it*—This is an unconscious truth spoken by Fag. It is always seen that a lie to be kept up, needs the support of a series of other lies.

36. *Draw on*—Make use of.

Invention—Inventive capacity. He means power to concoct lies. The art of lying needs great creative powers indeed. It is no fool's job.

Current lie—A lie that is convincing or has the appearance of truth.

37. *Forge*—To make a fraudulent imitation. To write (document, signature) to pass off as written by another.

Indorsements—Endorsements. To put signature on the back of a document for confirming a statement.

The Bill—A written order by drawer to drawee to pay sum on given date to drawer or to named payee.

Fag is using the terminology used in money transactions. If a bill has been forged, let an endorsement be also forged so that everything may pass on well. Similarly if a lie has been told let proper supporting lies also come as an endorsement.

38. *Credit*—Sum placed at a person's disposal in the books of a bank. Capt. Absolute has got to be witty as most of the characters in the play are. He keeps up the metaphorical terminology from business transactions begun by Fag and retorts suitably.

38-39. *Hurt your .....security*—Capt. Absolute warns Fag that his credit might well be in danger if he offers too much security. In other words his "precise lie" might be discovered if he chooses to clothe it with so many more false supporting statements.

40. *Changing his dress*—To be presentable.

43. *Fancy*—Think.

44. *His gentleman*—Personal servant.

48. *Do me the favour*—Another proof of Fag's refined language.

49. *We are recruiting*—Fag reminds his master of the lie they have agreed upon.

51. *In tenderness to*—Out of sympathy for.

Character—Reputation ; good name.

52. *Bring in chairmen etc.*—Fag requests his master not to forget to support his 'precise lie' with the subsidiaries.

53. *Esteem it*—Take it.

Scruple—Feel conscientious objection in telling.

54. *Hurts one's conscience*—Note the sly hypocrite. His conscience is quite safe when he tells a lie, but on being found out it is hurt.

56. *Whimsical*—Capricious. Used for Faulkland.

57. *His mistress*—Julia.

60. *Punctual in your return*—You have come at the time we appointed for the purpose. That shows that they have not accidentally met.

62. *The business I went on*—The work for which I went.

63. *How stand matters*—That indicates that Faulkland was Capt. Absolute's confidant. He is naturally curious to know the latest developments.

65. *Our quarrel*—Started deliberately by Lydia as she told her friend Julia in Act I, Scene II, lines-80—92.

Recalled—Called back by Lydia. That shows Capt. Absolute was intelligent enough to see through Lydia.

69. *Lose two-thirds . . . . fortune*—Capt. Absolute is not a romantic fool like Lydia for he understands that money is as important as love to be happily married. He sees no romance but foolishness in eloping at once, without Lydia getting her aunt's consent to marriage.

70. *Brought her to that*—Got her consent to elope with her.

72. *Trifle*—Do not take seriously.

73. *Sure of her*—Sure that she will marry you.

In your own character—As Capt. Absolute and not as Ensign Beverley. A serious suggestion from a serious character like Faulkland.

75. *Softly, softly*—Meant as a fun to tease him.

76. *Little Lydia*—An epithet of endearment.

78. *Impediment of our friends consent*—The condition of getting the consent of our relatives to our marriage. That would be against Lydia's romantic whims and therefore unacceptable to her.

78-79. *Regular humdrum wedding*—A wedding with usual pomp and show, rules and regulations.

79. *The reversion . . . . my side*—The right of succession to Capt. Absolute on the death of his father. *A good fortune* —refers to Sir Anthony's money.

80. *The discovery*—That he is Capt. Absolute, the heir to Sir Anthony's big forfune.

81. *Make myself necessary to her*—Make her really love me so that I become indispensable to her.

Before I risk it—Before I can disclose to her my true identity.

83. *Not in spirits*—Not enough cheerful. He says so not because he *is* so but because he thinks, he *ought* to be so, being separated from his beloved Julia. That is the sentimental lover *par excellence*. Since he does not enjoy himself in the absence of Julia, he is hurt when he later learns that Julia has been enjoying herself at balls in his absence.

85. *Forswear*—Leave.

86. *Teasing*—Irritating.

Captious—Sophistical ; trying to catch people in their faults.

Incorrigible—That cannot be improved.

This is a very befitting description of Faulkland's character. Because of lack of cheerfulness and monoton-

ous behaviour he is apt to be irritating. He is jealous and doubting by natures ; so he is captious. As a friend Capt. Absolute must have tried to rid Faulkland of these qualities for he himself is just the opposite. Since Capt. Absolute failed to bring any improvement in Faulkland he calls him incorrigible.

87. *Do love like a man*—Leave your sentimentality and behave like a normal person.

88. *I own company*—The sentimental lover would rather be disgraced than leave his sentimentality. It is an ironically foolish remark : for in the heart of hearts he thinks that his being unfit for company is a compliment to the lover in him.

89. *A romantic one too*—Capt. Absolute is really romantic for he gets thrills and adventures out of his love, whereas Faulkland is only sentimental.

90. *Confounded forrago*—A damned admixture.

91-92. *Flimsy furniture . . . . . brain*—Worthless ideas or fancies in the mind of idle country girl. Capt. Absolute is hinting at Lydia's sentimental nonsense that has compelled him to take the adventure of being in disguise. A similar ridiculous nonsense fills the brain of Faulkland also on whom every detail of the above description can be applied. He *doubts* the love of Julia, then *fears* he might lose Julia ; again he *hopes* he might yet not be rejected and *wishes* to *regain* that love. Thus he is lost in the ridiculous whirlpool of nonsensical fancies.

94. *Immutable*—Without change. Firmly.

You throw for a large stake—You are throwing the dice to win a huge prize *i.e.* Lydia along with her property.

95. *But losing*—Even if you do not get Lydia.

Throw again—Try to win some other girl.

96. *Set my sum of happiness*—I have staked all my happiness. *On this cast*—For winning Julia's love. He means, he would be constant to one only.

Were to be stript of all—Would he be deprived of all. Would be to lose all.

93-97. The earlier part of Faulkland's speech may be taken to hint that Capt. Absolute had had earlier unsuccessful love affairs also. So he remarks that if he fails in Lydia's case he might try again elsewhere. Indirectly he means to criticize Capt. Absolute's flirting nature and to flatter himself for his constancy in love. As he says, he has loved only once, *i.e.* Julia only, and if he failed, it would be losing all his happiness for life.

99. *Apprehension*—Fear (in case of Julia).
Whimsical—Capricious.
Conjure up—Imagine.

102. *Are there not a thousand*—Are there not present thousands of doubts to the success of my love?

103. *Fret her*—Make her worried for me.

104. *Oppress*—Weight over.

106. *Alarmed*—Afraid.

107. *Chilled her delicate frame*—Brought an attack of cold on her.

108. *Rude blast*—Some rough gale of wind.

110. *For whom . . . . mine*—For whose life alone I value my own life.

111. *Feeling fouls*—Sensitive people.

112. *Feature in the sky*—Changing aspects of the sky.
Movements of elements—Change of weather.

113. *Aspiration*—Blowing.

101-114. The whole speech is full of sentimental nonsense, one can imagine in lovers like Faulkland. While he enumerates his foolish 'apprehensions,' he flatters himself with sincerity in love for having them. This is the worse part of it.

115. *We many choose . . . . or not*—It depends upon an individual's temperament to imagine those 'apprehensions' or not. For one, Capt. Absolute would never be so.

117. *In spirits*—Happy and cheerful.

118. *Content*—Satisfied.

119-20. *I should be......for that*—It is a conscious or unconscious misrepresentation. As soon as he learns that Julia has been cheerful, he starts doubting her sincerity of love for him, because according to his theory a lover can never be happy while away from the beloved.

123. *Trifle with me*—Treat me with light-heartedness.

127-28. *I thought...this kind*—I think you have lived in contact with Sir Anthony for a time enough to come to know his hasty nature. So you should not have felt surprised at his sudden appearance in Bath.

129. *Upon my honour*—Capt. Absolute takes the oath ; then only Faulkland believes him.

130. *Hollo, Du Reigne*—Faulkland is at once excited and shouts at his servant for his hat.

131-32. *Now nothing...uneasiness*—Ironically wrong.

133. *Mr. Acres*—A friend of Capt. Absolute but does not know that Capt. Absolute is Ensign Beverley ; so takes him as his rival for the hand of Lydia. While Lydia hates him, Mrs. Malaprop had thought of favouring him as a suitor for Lydia till Sir Anthony came and his claim was dismissed.

136-37. *Show the gentleman up*—As earlier announced by Fag, Acres was waiting below. Capt. Absolute etc. were on the first floor ; so he had to be shown up.

138. *Is he much...family*—Faulkland's jealousy is aroused the moment he knows that Acres has been mixing with Julia.

139. *Very intimate*—The two words must have pierced Faulkland's heart like anything.

140. *Divert*—Amuse. A correct hint of Bob Acres' character. His ridiculousness amuses others.

141. *A few questions*—About Julia.

142. *A rival of mine...self's*—His rival for the hand of Lydia. Capt. Absolute's other self is that of Ensign Beverley.

146. *A concealed skulking rival*—The rival Beverley, according to Bob Acres, is a coward that courts Lydia in a hidden

manner and does not appear before him. *Skulking*—One keeping himself concealed in cowardice or with evil intent. Mark the irony when the remark is meant for Capt. Absolute and he is all the time before him.

148-53. *Hah ! my dear...the Mall*—This is the first speech of Bob Acres. It shows him bursting out with oaths and exclamations. His oaths are his own creation ; made on the spur of the moment and befitting the context. He shows himself quite conversant with fashions and genteel manners though an attempt to show these in excess always renders him ridiculous.

148-49. *Noble Captain and honest Jack*—He is so valuable that he cannot stop with only one address to his friend. *Just arrived*—To keep the unity of time, place and action all the characters are to be brought to Bath.

149. *Faith*—I speak truly.

150. *Your humble servant*—Now he notices Faulkland and addresses him. The first thing now Acres should do is, that he should introduce himself. So he does in this humble manner fashionable among his society.

150. *Warm work on the roads*—He is hinting at the great speed with which he has travelled.

151. *Odds whips and wheels*—This is the creative genius of Mr. Acres and his originality too. Since the context is of travelling his oath refers to whips and wheels. Odd's means God's

152. *Like a comet*—A comet crosses the space with great speed and leaves a shining tail behind : so did Mr. Acres travel with speed leaving behind a long trail of dust.

153. *The Mall*—The road on the north side of St. James' Park in London. It was a fashionable evening walk.

154. *Eccentric planet*—Mark the hit in the words. Bob Acres has compared himself to a comet, which falls through space because it moves away from its proper orbit thus behaving eccentrically. As to Mr. Acres' eccentricity there can be no doubt

155. *Your attraction hither*—We know what attraction have you here, *i.e.* Lydia Languish.

159. *Solicit your connexions*—Request to be connected to you as a friend.

159. *Hay, Jack—what*—He suddenly recalls that he knows Mr. Faulkland as Julia's lover.

161. *Ay, Bob.*—Yes, Bob. Capt. Absolute is intelligent enough to get the hint at once.

164. *Indeed a happy man*—For having won the love of a lady like Julia Melville.

166. *Spirits*—Cheerfulness.
Devonshire—In the south-west of England.

167. *Never knew her*—An example of irony again. Bob Acres says so far the satisfaction of Faulkland, not knowing it would pain him to death.

168. *Odds blushes and blooms*—In the context of Julia's health and cheerful spirits an oath hinting at blushes and blooming face is extremely apt.

169. *The German Spa*—Spa was a foreign health resort famous for its waters. It attracted visitors from distant places. Its reputation led the name to be adopted at several other places also.

171. *Indisposed*—Not quite well in health. He almost hopes she were so !

172. *Only said to vex you*—If she informed you so it was simply to tease you a little, as the lovers often do.

172-173. *Quite the reverse*—Exactly opposite to being indisposed; *i.e.*, very hale and hearty. Bob Acres perhaps seys so to please Faulkland. He asserts the details even when he does not know them quite.

174. *She has the advantage of me*—She is better than I am, as far as the cheerful spirits are concerned.

175. *Fretted myself ill*—Tormented myself with the apprehensions of her ill health to the verge of making myself ill.

176-77. *Are you angry . . . . etc.*—Capt. Absolute at once gets at the truth with this sarcastic question. Faulkland really *was* angry.

178—180. *Yet surely. . . . we love*—It is natural for lovers to be unwell when separated. This is real Faulkland.

181. *Violent, robust, unfeeling health*—Of Julia, as reported by Bob Acres.

183-84. *Oh, it was very, . . .etc.*—Sarcastically said.

185. *Good apartments, Jack*—Bob Acres now realizes that his enthusiastic report of Julia's health has brought this awkwardness. So he tries to change the topic and get over the embarrassment by referring to the good rooms occupied by Capt. Absolute.

186-88. *But you was . . . .hey* !—Faulkland is foolish enough to repeat the question. However, it is natural for him because he would somehow like to believe that Julia was not '*exceedingly well*' after all.

186. *You "was"*—That shows Faulkland was not a well-educated person too.

189. *Odds cricket*—By God, as happy and cheerful as a cricket.

The Belle—The best beauty.

191. *Lively*—Full of spirits.

194. *innate levity in women*—There is a natural non-seriousness in women. They are light-hearted.

195. *What ! happy and I away*—Now he absolutely reveals his jealous nature and sentimental nonsense. How could Julia be happy when he was away ? Absurdity *par excellence*.

196. *Have done*—Be done with your foolishness.

197. *Apprehensive for your . . . .spirits*—Just now you were afraid she might not be quite well and now when you are informed that she has been well, you think she ought not to have been so.

The rebuke is quite just and well-merited by Faulkland.

198-99. *Have I been. . . .company*—Faulkland has still not done. He further tries to show his faithfulness in love by saying that he has been unhappy all the while.

202. *Upon my word I acquit you*—Truly speaking the charge of being happy and "entertaining" cannot be brought against you. He has, on the other hand, been quite irritating.

205. *Confoundedly stupid*—Awfully foolish and dull. That he really is even now for he has been going on to show his stupidity in spite of Capt. Absolute's protestation to stop.

206. *What's the matter . . . ,gentleman*—Bob Acres is surprised to see this whim of Faulkland.

207-209. *He is only . . . .etc.*—Ironically spoken.

213—*Harpsichord*—A musical instrument like a piano, popular from 16th to 18th century.

214. *Flat and sharp*—Rise and fall in the notes of music. *Flat* are notes of low pitch whereas *sharp* are the high ones.

214. *Squallante, rumblante and quiverante*—Bob Acres' equivalent for *squalling*, *rumbling* and *quivering*. He has invented this jargon on the Italian fashion, to show what he felt when listening to Julia's music. Literally *squalling* means 'screaming'; '*rumbling*' is 'thundering' and '*quivering*' is 'trembling'.

As Herring "It is easy to see that he must have jarred upon Lydia's sensibility."

215. *This time month*—At this time a month ago.

215-16. *Odds minums and crotchets*—Again a suitable oath has been brought in by Acres. Since he is talking of music he brings in musical terminology. In European system of musical notations, *minums* (it should be '*minims*') are notes of half the value of semibreve and *crotchets* are notes of quarter the value of minims.

216. *Chirrup*—Sing cheerfully like the chirping of a bird.

217. *Mrs Piano*—The name is significant.

218-19. *There again. . . . .of me*—The '*humour*' of Faulkland is not over yet ; so he asks once again whether this gaiety on Julia's part was not unjustified.

220. *Music the food of love*—The opening of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*—"If music be the food of love, play on."

222. *What's his damn'd name*—Bob Acres' information has so exasperated him that he blurts out thus ; but it is spoken to Capt. Absolute, without Bob Acres hearing it.

222-23. *What songs*—Perhaps there is still hope, she might have sung the songs of being unhappy in separation from her lover.

224. *Not I indeed*—I do not remember.

225. *They were some . . . .warrant*—Capt. Absolute understands the idea behind Faulkland's question ; so he snatches the opportunity to have some more fun at his cost.

226. *Purling-stream airs*—Tunes that appear like the murmur of streams running through pebbles.

I warrant—I am sure.

227. "*When absent from my soul's delight*"—The song is still untraceable. The song whose title most approaches this is "when absent from the Nymph I love" in Calliope, (1788).

230. *Go, gentle gales*—The refrain from a song in *The Faithful Lovers*, given in *Clio and Euterpe* or *British Harmony* (1762). In it the lover asks the gale to carry his message to his beloved.

231. *Nothing like it*—Her song was not of the nature you have mentioned, *i.e.* it was not a song of sadness.

232. *My heart's my own etc.*—This was a song sung by Rosetta in Bickerstaffe's *Love in a Village*, It was a happy song.

234. *Fool, fool that I am*—Faulkland naturally gets angry on learning that Julia sang a song of happy spirits.

To fix all . . . .trifler—That I staked my happiness on such a light-hearted lover as Julia.

235. *'Sdeath*—God's death. An oath.

To make herself. . . . circle—The height of injustice and folly on Faulkland's part. He accuses Julia of being like a street-dancer, who collects admirers around her and sings and dances for their entertainment.

237. *Catches and glees*—*Catches* refers to a round of song

wherein a singer catches at the words of his companion singer. It is done in cheap songs. *Glees* are musical compositions for three or more adult male voices, one to each part, set to words grave or gay, often with contrasted movements. Faulkland's insinuation means that Julia has degraded herself to provide others with entertainment like a cheap singer.

227. *What can. . . . .Sir ?*—Faulkland uses the word *'Sir,'* as an expression of anger and taunt. Capt. Absolute retorts in the same vein.

240-42. *Nay, nay, nay. . . .doubt not*—Faulkland is so self-contradictory and absurd in this speech, that it is hardly possible to miss it. Now he says that he is only *'not sorry,'* now that he is *'glad'* and yet he wants her *plaintively gay.*

242. *A sympathetic heart*—It she had real sympathy for me.

243. *Would have. . . .a song*—She would have chosen a song of sadness.

244. *Temperately healthy*—Only moderately good in health. A little unwell perhaps.

245. *Plaintively gay*—Happy and yet somewhat melancholy.

245-46. *But she has. . . .not*—If she has been dancing also that would be the crowning shock to him. On learning that she *has* been dancing he again indulges in a ridiculous outburst of jealous temper.

250. *Last race ball*—The last ball at the end of the racing season.

252. *Hell and the devil*—Shows extreme disgust.

253. *She thrives in my absence*—She is actually happier in my absence whereas she should have been melancholy.

254. *Her whole feelings*—Her whole temperament.

255. *Pensive*—Melancholy ; sad.

256. *Sedentary*—Sitting lonely ; away from company.

Hours of care—I passed my time in anxious thoughts of her.

257. *Watchfulness*—Being awake, as all lovers are at night, or at least so they say.

258. *Damned levity*—The worst kind of frivolity.

259. *Don't expose yourself so*—Don't show to Bob Acres what an absurd fool you are.

261. *Ceremony of society*—Social formalities.

262. *Contain*—Check.

263. *For form's sake*—For the sake of social formalities. Although he is deeply shocked and pained at heart he would try not to appear so.

264. *A minuet*—A slow stately dance for two people, in triple measure.

265. *I dare. . . .for that*—I can surely say that she dances a minuet also quite well.

266. *Country-dancing*—A popular dance that originated in the country-side. Many pairs of dancers stand up face to face in it.

Odds swimmings—By God ! what a beautiful, smooth, swimming motion while she dances.

267. *Such an air*—Such gracefulness.

268. *Now disappointment on her*—Almost unbelievable absurdity Faulkland starts cursing Julia. Let her be disappointed in her ways of amusement.

268-69. *Defend this. . . .defend this*—Is it not impossible to defend this extreme levity in Julia ?

270. *Jigs and reels*—Both are the dances expressive of extreme cheerfulness.

272. *Regarded*—Noticed.

273. *Zounds*—God's wounds. An oath.

Cotillion—A kind of dignified dance.

Made one in—Taken part in.

274. *Monkey-led for a night*—To pass the whole night jumping

and skipping like a monkey. He is referring to her participation in vulgar dances.

275. *Run the gauntlet*—To pass between rows of men who strik one with sticks, cords etc. Julia would have jostled together with men in dance assemblies.

String—Line ; row.

Amorous palming puppies—Amorous young men taking Julia by the hand.

Faulkland is feeling extremely jealous of the young people who would have taken Julia by the hand and danced with her.

276. *To show....filly*—Walking step by step in the dance like a mare under training in a riding centre.

Filly—A young mare ; therefore a young girl. Here meant for Julia.

277. *But one man*—Her lover to be married or her husband.

278. *Delicate woman*—A woman of refined feelings.

To pair with—To act as partner in the dance.

280. *The rest of the...aunts*—When participating in a country dance a girl should see that except her husband all the other participants are aged men.

281-82. *Ay, to be sure...etc.*—Capt. Absolute is still enjoying the discomfiture of Faulkland at the report of Bob Acres about Julia. He has been sarcastic throughout as here.

283. *Vicious*—Evil.

Set—Party ; assembly.

284. *Spread like a contagion*—Like a contagious disease it will spread by contact in the dance and all the others would also become 'vicious'.

284-85. *The action...of the jig*—The notes of the jig produce immoral effect on the dancers.

285. *Jig*—A kind of lively dance.

Lascivious—Lustful ; wanton.

286. *Warm-breathed sighs*—Panting with passion.
Impregnate—Saturate ; fill.

287. *Electrical*—Susceptible.

288. *Each amorous......the chain*—One person's immorality excites the lust of others also.

289. *Flurried*—Agitated ; nervous.

290. *Confouned looby*—Damned lubber ; a silly fellow.
Meant for Bob Acres, who has seen his silly sentimentality.

294. *Five minutes since*—Five minutes ago, as soon as he had been told of Julia's presence in Bath he had exclaimed that "nothing on earth...etc."

300. *Ha ! ha ! jealous of me*—Bob Acres seems to be enjoying the silly possibility that Faulkland was jealous of him because he had praised Julia.

303. *Sprightly grace*—Cheerful, attractive manners.
Insinuating—Indirectly suggestive.

303-304. *That sprightly........the girls here*—Capt. Absolute now seems to be enjoying himself at the cost of Bob Acres. He ironically suggests that the graceful and refined manners of Acres are such that all the young girls at Bath might fall in love with him.

305. *Ah ! you joke*—He says so while he actually feels flattered.

306. *Not my own property*—Because he has given himself away to Lydia, he has no more remained his property.

307. *Forestalled me*—Anticipated and so baffled me in my attempt to fall in love.

Abide me—Stand faithfully with me.

308. *I used to dress so badly*—Acres thinks he was disliked by Lydia because of his not being dressed in the up-to-date fashion.

308-309. *Odds frogs and tambours*—He is swearing by the articles of dress in a similar context.

Frogs—A fastening for the front of a military coat. It has a decorative purpose.

Tambours—Are circular frames on which silk etc. is stretched to be embroidered. It may also mean the cloth so embroidered. It was a fashion of the times to wear embroidered clothes.

309. *I shan't take matters so here*—I will not let the matter stand so in this case, *i.e.* be criticized, on account of my dress, by Lydia.

310. *Ancient madam....in it*—My old mother has now no control over what I do. I am free to act as I like.

310-11. *I'll make......who's master*—I will no more wear my old clothes. Since I was not the master of myself before, I had to continue to wear them, but now I am free from the yoke of my mother and so will instantaneously throw away my old clothes.

311. *Cashier*—Discard ; dismiss from service.

312. *Hunting-frock*—A clothing worn by hunters.

Render my....incapable—I would make my leather breeches unsuitable for use, *i.e.* discard them.

313. *Hair has been under training*—was having fashionable hair-dressing for better appearance.

315. *Thoff*—Though.

The side curls are a little restive—The curly hair on the sides does not obey the discipline of hair-dressing.

316. *Hind part*—Hair at the back side of head.

Takes it very kindly—Has been well dressed.

317. *You'll polish*—You will look elegant and active with all the changes of hair-dressing and clothing etc.

318. *I propose so*—I am trying to do so.

If I can find out—He is before him but Acres is an ironical ignorance.

319. *Odds triggers and flints*—Since Ensign Beverley is the rival of Bob Acres in love, he thinks of fighting a duel with him and killing him perhaps. So he swears by the terms in shooting.

Trigger—A driver for releasing spring or catch, especially

projecting tongue in firearm that liberates hammer of lock. In Urdu called *ghora* in a gun or pistol.
Flints—"Eighteenth century guns were fitted with locks in which a flint was struck against the hammer and produced spark which ignited the powder" (Balston).

319-320. *I'll make......of it.*—I will show Beverley that I am not a fellow to be defeated in everything after all. He seems to have beaten me in gaining Lydia's favour but by my fighting instinct I will show him that I am his superior at least in this.

The swaggerer in Bob Acres is awake. The irony is that he is one of the most coward souls that ever held a pistol.

Rana Rizwan

321. *Spoke like a man*—You have spoken these courageous words in the true brave spirit of a man.

322. *Odd kind......Swearing*—His method of swearing by the things he is talking about. The originality of the oaths must have struck Capt. Absolute earlier also for Acres has been doing it since he appeared on the scene, but he refers to it only now to enjoy further the swagger of Acres.

324. *'Tis genteel*—It is a fashionable kind of oath fit for high society.

I didn't invent......though—An honest confession from a man of sincerity.

325. *Militia*—Military force, especially citizens' army. Only 2 weeks' training was required every year to enlist one in this army.

327. *Antiquity*—That they have been used for such a long time.

Respectable—Worthy to be used in the genteel society.

328. *The ancients*—The people of ancient days.
Would never......or two—Would not confine them to the use of one or two popular oaths only but would invent new ones suitable for the occasion. Acres also does the same.

329. *Jove*—Jupiter. The chief of the Roman gods. Identified with the Greek god Zeus.

330. *Mars*—The Roman god of war.

Venus—The Roman goddess of love. Mother of cupid.
Pallas—The Greek goddess of wisdom.

According to the sentiment—As suitable to the ideas expressed at the occasion, *e.g.* speaking of a duel, one would swear by Mars, while expressing love, by Venus etc.

331. *Swear with propriety*—Swear in the correct manner.

332. *My little major*—"Commander in our militia." (Line 325)
The oath. . . . .sense—The oath should convey the idea to be expressed otherwise also.

333. *Oath referential*—The oath with a reference to the subject being talked about.

334. *Sentimental swearing*—Swearing suitable to the sentiment to be expressed.

335. *I daresay*—If I may venture to say so.

336. *Supplant*—Oust and take the place of.

Figures of imprecation—Rhetorical manner of cursing. An imprecation is a spoken curse.

337. *Best terms*—The best words of expression.

Obsolete—Old, out of fashion and use.

338. *Damns . . . . day*—Even the word 'damn' was once fashionable and people swore by it. But now it is taken as vulgar.

339. *There is a gentleman*—He is Sir Anthony Absolute. Fag does not mention the fact deliberately to create sensation.

340. *Parlour*—The sitting room.

345. *You puppy*—You little dog.

Directly—Immediately.

347. *Expect a message*—Expecting to be invited by Mrs. Malaprop. However, when he does get the message, the tables seem turned.

348. *Sent also*—Invited.
Sir Lucius O'Trigger—An Irish gentleman of aristocratic manners. Mrs. Malaprop has been writing to him the love-letters under the name of Delia, while he has been thinking they come from Lydia. His name is significant; for he is a man of honour and is ever ready with guns and pistols to fight a duel. Hence O'Trigger.

350. *Bumpers to little Lydia*—Brim-full glasses of wine will be drunk as a toast to Lydia's happiness.

351. *That I will with all my heart*—The expression has the hidden idea behind it that, Lydia being his beloved, he would do so with gladness.

352. *Parental lecture*—That has been the habit of Sir Anthony. Being dictatorial he would criticize the son and give a moral sermon in the bargain.

353-54. *I wish the gout . . . . . .my soul*—So that he had not been able to come to Bath at all, endangering the discovery of his love-affair with Lydia.

355. *Sir I am delighted*—Which he is not.

356. *Apprehensive*—Anxious.

360. *I am on duty*—The 'precise lie' as earlier agreed upon between him and Fag.

362-363. A *little matter of business*—An insignificant matter. He means Capt. Absolute's proposed marriage with Lydia. Arranged marriages were quite common in those days.

364. *Infirm*—Weak.

Not trouble you long—I may die early.

367. *Hearty*—Cheerful; in spirits.

371. *I may . . . . . .plague you*—I may continue to trouble you by not dying early. As long as I do not die my money will not go to you.

372. *Am sensible*—I know.

373. *Commission*—Warrant conferring authority especially

that of officers in the army, navy and air force from lieutenant or pilot officer upwards. He was a Captain in the king's army.

What I have hitherto allowed you—Whatever money as an allowance I used to give you in the past.

374. *I but small pittance*—Only a small remuneration or allowance.

For a lad of your spirit—For a young man of your high spirits and pleasure-seeking habits.

377. *Make some figure*—Be distinguished.

377. *Resolved*—Decided.

378. *To fix you . . . . independence*—To settle upon you a large sum of money so that you are no more dependent even upon me for your expenses.

Sir Anthony seems to be very shrewd. He is preparing grounds for his disclosure of having settled his marriage. Capt. Absolute is totally formal and submissive for he has no idea what is going to come.

379. *Overpowers*—Overwhelms.

Generosity—He is referring to his father's kind offer of settling some property etc. on him.

381. *Filial affection*—The affection of a son for his father.

380-81. *Make the gratitude . . . . affection*—I feel so indebted to you for your generous offer that even my natural affection for you as a son seems to be less warm than a rational consideration of my gratefulness to you.

383. *Master of large estate*—Capt. Absolute thinks that his father would give his own property to him, while Sir Anthony has Lydia's money in mind.

384. *Let my future life . . . . etc.*—It is useless to speak of my gratefulness ; let it be shown by my future conduct.

385. *The sense of your munificence*—The feeling of indebtedness on your generous offer of property etc.

386. *Presume*—Take the liberty to think.

Quit—Leave.

387. *That shall . . . . choose*—How cleverly Sir Anthony gives out the information. It appears as if it is a very casual thing.

388. *My wife, Sir !*—Capt. Absolute is naturally surprised beyond measure. It provides a lot of interest to the audience also.

389. *Settle that between you*—Decide, whether you should stay in the army or not, with your wife consciously.

392-93. *Did not I mention her before ?*—The sly dog ! He poses as a slip of memory what was consciously done on purpose.

395. *Odd so*—It is very odd that I should have forgotten to mention the settlement of your marriage.

I mustn't forget her though—Even if I forgot to mention her to you, I should not forget about her myself because hers is an important role in this context. She will actually bring the property etc.

397. *The fortune . . . . wife*—The property is to come to you through a wife only after marriage.

398. *Suppose . . . . difference*—Sir Anthony wants that his son should accept the proposal of marriage as an accomplished fact and say nothing about it. So the says that even if the property etc. is to come through a wife, the son should in all humility be indebted to him for he has settled that marriage and been instrumental in bringing money.

400. *What the devil . . . . the fool*—Sir Anthony being Absolute can stand no opposition. Since a hint of disagreement comes from the son in the words "Sir you amaze me", Sir Anthony's anger starts rising. He will make himself riduculous soon with an excessive outburst of his anger.

405. *Odds life*—God's life. An oath.

It you have . . . . on it—If you want to have the farm you must be prepared to accept the cattle thereon, also. So if you want to have Lydia's property you must be ready to accept Lydia also. *Livest ck* is cattle. It is not quite inadvertently that the wife has been compared to

cattle ; she was really taken to be like that. The nation was quite common in India also till a few decades before.

407-8. *If my happiness . . . .purchase*—It you want to purchase the property at the cost of my happiness I refuse the deal. Capt. Absolute thinks that in such a case he wil! have to give up Lydia.

408-9. *Who is the lady* ?—A very natural question showing inquisitiveness. Just think what would have been the shape of the comedy if Sir Anthony had disclosed, she was Lydia herself. How all the opposition from Capt. Absolute would have gone and he would have been all gratitude and filial love ! But then where would have been the comedy ? The plot would have been wounded up at once.

It is natural also that Sir Anthony should not disclose the identity of the lady for it goes against his son's total submission to his authority as a father. He says that much "what's that you, Sir ?" Capt. Absolute, however, thinks differently as all young men do.

411. *Directly*—At once.

412-13. *You summon. . . . nothing of*—To ask me to give all my love to lady utterly unknown to me.

414-15. *I am sure . . . . nothing of*—What Sir Anthony means is ; if you know nothing about her, you know nothing against her, and if you know nothing against her which will mark her an unfit match, why do you refuse to marry her ? Strange logic indeed !

417-18. *My heart . . . . angel*—I am in love with a beautiful lady.

419-20. *Then pray . . . . on her*—Sir Anthony is very ironical. He says : let your heart send her a note of excuse that some *business* holds you back from her. He is comparing marriage to business.

421. *My vows are pledged to her*—Both father and son are witty people. The father has started talking in terms of business. The son continues the metaphor and gets a retort in similar terminology.

Capt. Absolute says he has pledged his vow with her *i.e.* promised to marry her.

422. *Let her foreclose*—In business transactions "to pledge anything is to make it a security for borrowed money. If the money is not paid, *i.e.* the pledge is not redeemed, within a certain time, the lender can bar the right of redemption and treat it as an absolute property." (Balston). This is known as foreclosing. Sir Anthony says that if you have kept your vows as a pledge to her, do not redeem them and let her forfeit them. He only means to say "don't marry her."

423-24. *You have the . . . . exchange*—Your beloved must also have pledged her vows, to you. So even if you don't redeem your vows there would be no loss. Extremely ironical are Sir Anthony's remarks.

426. *Once for all*—For good.

427. *In this point . . . . you*—Both Capt. Absolute and Lydia are rebellious wards. The reason of this should of course be sought in their dictatorial guardians.

428. *Hark'ee*—Hark ye. Listen to me.

430-32. *I am compliance. . . . own way*—I can accept anything from you so long as you do not oppose me. What an absurd logic. If he agrees on the terms he himself wants to dictate, where is the compliance ?

430. *Compliance*—Agreement.

431. *Thwarted*—Opposed.

432. *In a frenzy*—In violent anger.

434-35. *Now damn me . . . . etc.*—Let me be damned if ever I call you my son again.

438. *Give me . . . . a nod*—Promise me, to agree to marry the girl of my choice, even by a nod and I would excuse you.

439. *I mean, you dog*—He has earlier said that let him be damned if he calls his son Jack again. By force of habit the word 'Jack' comes out of his mouth, but he suddenly gets conscious of it and says—"I mean dog" etc.

441. *Some mass of ugliness*—Some very ugly girl. It is just

possible his father might have agreed to marry him to some very ugly lady merely for the sake of money.

443. *Sirrah*—A word of address used to show contempt or anger.

443-449. The speech puts Sir Anthony on the very pinnacle of absurdity. This shows how far his 'absolute' character can take him. He doesn't mean all this of course, but he would love to be so respected.

444. *Hump*—Protuberance, *i.e.*, projected lump of flesh, especially on the back as deformity. In Urdu called '*Koober*'.

445. *Crooked as the cresent*—Curved in shape like the crescent moon. It means much deformed in shape.

446. *The bull's in Cox's Museum*—"James Cox was a jeweller of 103 Shoe Lane, who in 1773 and 1774 opened at Spring Gardens an exhibition of 56 mechanical toys and curiosities, for which he charged half-a-guinea for admission. The collection was valued at £197,500, and there is in the British Museum a Descriptive Inventory made when he disposed of it by lottery. Fanny Burney mentions it in *Evelina*, letter 19" (Herring). There must have been in this exhibition some curiosity like a bull having a rolling eye to which Sheridan makes a reference by way of providing local colour.

446-47. *A skin like a mummy*—Dry and wrinkled skin like that of a mummy. *A mummy* is a body of human being or animal embalmed for burial.

447. *The beard of a Jew*—A Jew keeps a beard very dutifully.

448. *Ogle her*—Make love to her fondly.

449. *Sit up . . . .beauty*—Even then you will have to take her as very beautiful and praise her as much as you would have done if she were really so.

450. *This is indeed !*—Very ironically said. He means that it is the very height of irrationality and immoderation.

451. *Sneering*—Uttering derisive words of the ironical kind. *Puppy* !—You little dog ! For he is oath-bound not to call him Jack.

Grinning—smiling stupidly.

452. *Jackanapes*—Coxcomb ; monkey.

453-54. *I never was . . . . my life*—He denies that he is smiling for according to him, he was the least inclined to do so at the moment. He was rather very unhappy.

455-56. *Laughing in your sleeve*—Laughing secretly ; without letting me notice it.

456. *I know you will grin*—That he must do for it is Sir Anthony who is behaving in a silly manner. If out of respect he cannot laugh at one's elder's absurdity before him, he will do so as soon as his back is turned.

458. *I know my duty better*—I know my duty very well ; so I cannot laugh at my father.

459. *None of your passion, sir*—Do not show me your resentment by questioning my statements.

460. *It won't do with me*—I won't change my mind because of your violent temper, rest assured.

462. *Cooler*—More calm and dispassionate.

463. *Confounded*—Shameful.

463-464. *In a passion . . . . . heart*—You are in a temper inwardly.

464. *Hypocritical*—One who pretends ; Dissembler.

466. *Upon my word*—Believe me.

467. *Fly out*—Get into a passion. Whatever Sir Anthony accuses his son of, he is doing himself. He is himself in a most violent temper and is dissembling too.

Can't you be cool like me—What irony indeed ! He quotes his own example of being cool when he is the farthest from it.

468. *What the devil*—An expression of anger. Can passion do any good ? Actually he himself needs learning the lesson he is preaching.

469. *Impudent*—Unblushingly disrespectful.
Insolent—Insulting.

Overbearing—Domineering.

470. *Reprobate*—Hardened sinner. Immoral.

Provoke me—Excite my temper.

471. *Rely upon . . . . temper*—You are taking liberties because you think I am a man of soft nature. What an irony !

472. *Meekness of my disposition*—Same as above.

473. *The patience . . . . at last*—Even a saint who is least expected to be angry, may lose his temper if the limit is crossed. He indirectly compares himself to a saint.

475. *Consider of this*—Decide whether you agree to marry the girl of my choice.

477-80. *Don't enter the same . . . . your own*—He means he would sever all connection with his son for all practical purposes.

478. *Hemisphere*—Half the earth.

480-81. *I'll . . . . commission*—I will see that you are turned out from your service in the army.

481. *Lodge*—Put.

A five-and-threepence—Equivalent to a quarter of a guinea. Meant as legal fee to be used for the purpose. *Or*—He means he will leave only a paltry sum in the hands of the trustees of his property, which will yield almost nothing by way of interest on which the son will have to live.

483. *Disown you*—Refuse to admit you as my son.

Disinherit you—Not allow you to inherit my property.
Unget you—Declare that I am not the begetter, *i.e.* father of yours.

(Stage Direction—*Solus*—Latin word meaning alone.

485. *Mild, gentle, considerate*—Ironically said. He actually means exactly the opposite of these.

I kiss your hands—As an expression of my love and admiration for you. Actually he has none of the two.

487-88. *I dare not . . . . the truth*—I have not the courage to tell him the truth about Lydia.

488. *Hug*—An old ugly woman.

489. *Bestow on me*—Very kindly present to me as a great gift.

489—91. *Yet he . . . . companion*—The reason of misunderstanding between the old and the young is exactly this. The old ones seem to forget what they were or how they felt when they were young. If the old people should only make an allowance for the feelings of the young people and try to check their instinct of authority, much ill-will between them will turn into good-will.

490. *Bold intriguer*—Carried out tricks and conspiracies in love matters boldly.

Gay—Happy. Not grumbling as now.

492. *Assuredly*—Surely.

Wroth to a degree—Very much in a temper.

493. *Eight or . . . . at a time*—Very expressive exaggeration by loquacious Fag.

494. *Muttering*—Murmuring angrily.

Growling—Sound like that of a dog in anger.

Thumping—Beating.

Banister—Balusters. The posts that hold the railing.

495. *Rap*—A hit.

496-97. *Bids me. . . my master*—Asks me to convey it to you. It was meant for the Captain and not for Fag.

498. *Turnspit*—A kind of rotate a wheel that turns a roast-spit over the fire). A kind of dog used in the kitchen to rotate a wheel that turns a roast spit over the fire.

Area—A sunk court railed off from pavement and giving access to basement of a house.

A puppy triumvirate—The three dogs. Fag, the cook and the turnspit.

499. *Upon my credit*—Please believe me.

501. *Drop his acquaintance*—A mild expression for severing all connection with him, or 'refuse to accept him as my father'.

It is the height of bold impertinence on the part of a servant to say so to his master.

502. *Cease your impertinence*—Stop your impertinent remarks at the most in opportune time.

503. *For nothing more*—For nothing else than to criticise my father.

504. *Trims*—Thrashes. Puts down.

505. *Vents his spleen*—Expresses his anger.

508. *Vilest injustice*—Injustice of the worst kind. But the fun is that what he is accusing his master of he does very soon himself. Fag thinks it highly unjust to express one's anger meant for a certain person, on the other, that chances to come your way. But he suddenly gets unnecessarily angry upon the errand boy, while getting no opportunity to show his dissatisfaction with his master.

511. *Bowl*—Speak in a noisy way.

512. *The meanest disposition*—The words are to be taken in continuation with his soliloquy in line 509, that was interrupted by the errand boy.

514. *Impudent jackanapes*—Imperinent mankey. Mark that a similar word was used by Sir Anthony for his son. So these servants, like Mr. Fag, learn all these '*genteel names*' from their masters.

516. *Kitchen-bred*—Low-born. An abuse.

ACT II. SCENE II

(Stage Direction)—*The North Parade*—A public walk with a wide pavement. Fashionable people frequented these walks. As the New Bath Guide indicates, and is also referred to in this very scene in line 14, there was also a South Parade.

Line 1. *Another Rival*—The title of the book is thus explainable with this multiplicity of the rivals. For Lydia, Bob Acres an Ensign Beverley, were already contending. Now according to the ignorant Lucy, the third, *i.e.*, Capt. Absolute has also been added.

2-3. *I shall not . . . . name*—I shall not consider him as a qualified lover for my mistress, Lydia.

3. *Till my purse . . . . form*—Till Capt. Absolute pays me money for bringing upon him my lady's favour or acting as the go-between. She has been getting tips from the other two rivals already ; so she logically concludes, the third to follow suit. By indicating that Capt. Absolute will not be considered a lover unless she enlists his name, she intends to show her self-importance.

4. *Poor Acres is dismissed*—As already hinted to us in the conversation betweeu Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony. Ref. Act I, Scene II—lines 292—294.

5. *Friendly office*—The duty of a friend.

Beverley was here . . . . etc.—That Ensign Beverley had met Lydia on the North Parade before Acres came. The information excited him so much that he challenged Beverley to a duel.

7. *Dear Delia*—Mrs. Malaprop conducted her correspondence with Sir Lucius O'Trigger under the assumed name of Delia. It had long been fashionable to carry

on one's romances under a false romantic name ; ***Delia*** and *Celia* were the most common for the purpose.

Sir Lucius was given to understand by Lucy that this Delia was the niece Lydia and not the aunt Mrs. Malaprop. This led to a lot of misunderstanding and fun at the cost of Sir Lucius and Mrs. Malaprop. This is an example in the play of the use of the common weapon with a comedy writer—the mistaken identity.

8. *Scruple of conscience*—Moral hesitation.

9. *From this deceit*—The deceit was of telling Sir Lucius that Delia was Lydia and not Mrs. Malaprop.

9-10. *Though I should. . . .fifty*—Sir Lucius would not pay me the liberal amounts he does, if he knew that his Delia was Mrs. Malaprop, an old hag of fifty.
My hero—Sir Lucius.

10-11. *Her own mistress*—Completely independent.

12. *Ambassadress*—Lady ambassador ; because Lucy was the person who had represented Delia so far. Sir Lucius had no meeting with his beloved Delia till now.
Upon my conscience—I speak truly.

14. *The South Parade*—The public walk on the South Side. Sir Lucius had been searching Lucy on the South Parade while she was on the North side.

15. *Speaking simply*—Straightforwardly or artlessly. But this artlessness is feigned.
O gemini—O my stars !

16. *Your worship*—An example of Lucy's artfulness while she appears simplicity incarnate.

17. *Faith*—Really so.

18. *Comical*—Funny.

19. *Nap*—Dozing ; short sleep.

20. *The Parade Coffee-house*—The Coffee-house situated by the North Parade.
I chose the window—I selected to take a nap by the window seat on purpose ; so as not to miss you.

22. *My stars*—An exclamation of surprise.
Wager—Bet.

I went by—I passed bv your window at the Coffee-house.

25. *Never dreamt*—Never thought.

29. *Empty-handed*—Without any messege from my Delia.

30. *Dear creature*—Delia. (Mrs. Malaprop)

32. *A letter*—The letter from Mrs. Malaprop is typical of her style in the inappropriate use of words. It sounds more funny still when we think it comes from an old lady of fifty.

33-36. *There is O'Trigger*—She means that the instinctive force of love is often more effective than long domestic union. Mrs. Malaprop was subject to such a force of love, when she only saw a glimpse of Sir Lucius. The romantic hint at "whoever loved that, loved not at first sight." (Shakespeare)

37. *Very pretty*—The old man's vanity is tickled.

37-39. *Female. . .affections*—Being subject to female formalities, she does not make a more voluble expression of her love but feels happy that Sir Lucius is a man worthy of her affections.

41. *Upon my conscience*—Sir Lucius seems to have this oath as his favourite one. He has earlier used it in lines 12-13.

41. *A great mistress of language*—Seems to have great command over language. Sir Lucius has, however, noted the wrong use of words.

42. *Queen of the dictionary*—For all the words seem to be at the beck and call of her.

43. *For the devil. . . .call*—Not a single word can refuse to come at her call. He means she would use any word anywhere irrespective of its appropriateness.

44. *Though one. . . .of hearing*—Although it seems that the right words, being quite far from the reach of her voice, do not come to her. She, therefore, uses the wrong ones that are within the reach of her call.

Sir Lucius puts the faults of Delia a little indulgently for he is blindly in love with her.

45. *A lady of experience*—A lady with great experience of reading and writing ; so having command over language. This is what Lucy had in mind. But the expression may also mean a lady having much experience of love affairs and the related terminology or it may mean a lady with worldly experience. It is the last two meanings that strike Sir Lucius. Hence his question expressing surprise that a lady of seventeen should have so much experience.

47-48. *Oh, true Sir. . . .offhand*—Lucy is intelligent enough to read the doubts of Sir Lucius and allays them at once by saying that Delia is so well read.

48. *Offhand*—Straightaway.

49. *Deep read*—Widely read.

50. *Arbitrary*—Capricious ; unrestrained. That is why she uses whichever word she likes without caring for its appropriateness.

51-52. *Here are. . . .this note*—Many words have been unsuitably used in this letter. During those years there was a notorious press-gang the purpose of which was to recruit unwilling people for service in foreign countries. They used to do this by bribing these people. They were *pressed* into service unwillingly.

52. *Habeas Corpus. . . .christendom*—Be set free. A Habeas Corpus is a legal order to decide whether a person has been arrested legally or not by asking that person to be produced before that court. What Sir Lucius means is that the words in Delia's letter were so inappropriately and unjustly used that if they applied to any court in the world for freedom, that Court would set them free.

53. *Christendom*—Wherever Christians are. He means anywhere in the world.

54. *How she talks of you*—How she praises you !

56-57. *I'll make. . . .bargain*—Not only would I make a good husband to her but also raise her status because my title would bring her to be called Lady O'Trigger. Even

though Sir Lucius was very poor, he had the pride of his high birth and title.

58. *The old gentlewoman*—Mrs. Malaprop. Since Sir Lucius thinks he has to marry the niece, he suggests that it should be done with her aunt's consent.

Do everything fairly—He wants to be honest in everything.

60-61. *I thought you. . . . . .so nice*—I thought you were not rich so you would like to marry Lydia for money. If you pose to be so nice as to get Mrs. Malaprop's consent, there is danger to your success.

62. *Von have hit it*—You have said the correct thing.

63. *I am so poor. . . . . .action*—Sir Lucius takes Lucy's remark in his favuur and says that because he is poor, he cannot afford to do anything dishonestly. It he were rich, and had done any dishonourable thing, no one would have accused him of it but a poor man can never be excused.

64-65. *If I did not. . . . . .pleasure*—If I had been rich, I might have secured your mistress unfairly.

67. *Riband*—Ribbon.

68. *This*—Delia's letter.

Hussy—A pert girl.

69. *Beforehand*—In advance.

To put you in mind—To let you remember that you have to come in the evening to fetch a reply of this letter from me.

70. *I never. . . . . .gemman*—I never saw such a gentleman as you. Spoken mischievously, because Sir Lucius had kissed her.

Impudent—Shamelessly forward as to kiss without her consent.

72. *Faith she will*—She will certainly like me.

73-74. *Modesty. . . . . . . .liked*—Although women praise the quality of modesty in their lovers they don't really like it.

78. *Baggage*—A hussy. An impertinent or a light-hearted woman.

I'll make it a truth—I will kiss you fifty times presently and thus make it a truth.

81. *I'll quiet your conscience*—I will certainly give you fifty kisses so that you have to convey a truth (of 50 kisses) and keep a quiet, undisturbed conscience.

82. *So so*—How do you do.

83. *Flurry*—Make nervous.

85. *A little less simplicity etc.*—Fag sees through Lucy's feigned artlessness, so he asks her to be more frank and truthful.

86. *You play false with us*—Fag has seen her handing over a letter to Sir Lucius. Here he accuses her of being insincere to his master, Beverley. A clever liar like Fag easily understands the trick of Lucy and extracts the secret from her.

87. *The baronet*—Sir Lucius.

88. *If he don't call him out*—If he does not challenge Sir Lucius in a duel, I will do so for his being a rival lover.

89. *Gentleman's gentlemen*—The private servants.

90. *So hasty*—In feeling offended.

91. *Taken with*—Entangled by.

Address—Love-making.

92. *What tastes some people have*—Fag is surprised to know about the love-sickness in such old people as Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Lucius.

93. *I suppose . . . . . times*—I have seen her a hundred times without noticing any charm in her.

94. *Our young lady*—Lydia.

99. *Even so*—Exactly so.

I overheard it all—Lucy's cleverness. How else could she extract money from all ?

104. *Cast down by*—Feel sad about.

105. *Disconsolate*—Unhappy ; disheartened. Ironically said, for this proves to be the happiest news for him.

ACT—III SCENE—I

Line 1. *'Tis just . . . . . .told me*—Fag had informed him that Lydia, whom he loved, was the very girl Sir Anthony wanted him to marry.

Whimsical enough, faith—What a strange fact it has turned out to be indeed !

3. *Plotting*—Conspiring.

To run away with her—Love affair as Beverley.

Yet a while—For some time more.

5. *Summary a method*—Taking decisions in a hurry according to his whim.

6. *Read my recantation*—Inform him of my decision to confess my earlier error and look penitent. *Recantation* is a withdrawal of earlier opinion with public confession of error. Sometimes when the people of other faiths were converted, they were asked to "read their recantation."

Instantly—Immediately.

7. *Conversion*—From a rebellious attitude to one of abject submission.

I can assure . . . . . .sincere—I shall have to convince him that I am sincerely repentent.

9. *Plaguy gruff*—Annoyingly surly ; excessively rough.

10. *I'll die . . . . . .him*—Sir Anthony really seems very angry as is idicated by this speech. He is determined not to forgive him for his disobedience.

11. *I'll live . . . . . .him*—He suddenly gets conscious that if he dies his son would be wholly free and happy, so he changes his statement and wants to live as long as possible to trouble the haughty boy.

12. *Impudence*—Shameless impertinence.

Almost put . . . . . .temper—Had almost brought me to the

verge of being angry. Although he was out of temper beyond measure he does not admit it.

13. *Obstinate*—Inflexible.

Self-willed—Unyielding ; Stubborn.

14. *Who can . . . . after*—From whom has he got these qualities in his character ? The humour lies in the fact that the son has inherited from his father what he is accused of, but Sir Anthony would never accept it.

My return—This is how he has rewarded me.

14-15. *For getting . . . . . . .sisters*—For begetting him as my eldest child. What a claim indeed ! As if it was in his control to beget whomsoever he liked, first. The lines however show Sir Anthony's deep love for his son.

15. *Putting him*—Enlisting him.

16. *Marching regiment*—Infantry. Army that moves on foot while fighting.

17. *Fifty pounds a year*—As a handsome allowance, even though he was getting his pay all the while.

18. *Done with him*—Sever all relations with him.

He's anybody's son—I don't have the attachment for him as I would have for my son. He is as unrelated to me as anybody else's son.

21. *No for . . . face*—Now let me at once wear a face showing penitence.

22. *Fellow*—He would never call him Jack again ; as earlier vowed.

23. *Penitent*—One who is sorry for his earlier conduct.

24. *Impudent scoundrel*—Shameless villain.

26. *Submit entirely*—Yield completely.

Will—Desire. Whatever you order me to do I will do.

27. *What's that*—What do you mean ?

28. *Revolving*—Thinking over and over again ; thus revolving the thought in my mind.

Reflecting—Coolly considering.

30. *Condescension*—Stooping down to one's inferiors to show kindness to them.

32. *Likewise*—In the same way.

Weighing and balancing—Considering the value of the different aspects of your order.

33. *What you were . . . . .authority*—Sir Anthony never said a word about these for he was only fretting and fuming all along at his son's disobedience. Capt. Absolute very cleverly mentions these to tickle the old man's vanity.

37. *Resolution*—Determination.

Inclination—Desire.

37-38. *To sacrifice. . . . .etc.*—I have decided not to press any of my wishes on you and to obey you in everything to your entire satisfaction.

Sir Anthony now melts absolutely, feeling flattered with his victory. However, he is still in his humour of doing a thing to the extreme. He forgets himself altogether in the praise of Lydia's beauty and appears extremely funny. The scene now becomes almost farcical.

39. *Talk sense*—You appear to be talking sensibly now in contrast to your earlier nonsense.

40. *I never heard . . . . .life*—Always using superlative degree of praise or blame.

41. *Confound you !*—A mild oath.

You shall be Jack again—So far he has been calling him "fellow", "puppy" etc.

42. *Appellation*—Name by which to call.

43. *Why then . . . . .my dear Jack*—This real love was lurking behind Sir Anthony's anger all the time.

44—46. *Nothing but . . . . .at first*—It was because of your getting into a temper against me that I did not tell you about the lady in question.

46. *Rapture*—Excessive joy.

48. *Languish ? what . . . .etc.*—Capt. Absolute flings surprise as if he does not know about Lydia Languish, anything at all.

52-53 *Ordered to your regiment*—Ordered to join your regiment again.

Now we know since when the acquaintance between Capt. Absolute and Lydia started. It might have been that meeting which brought him to Bath.

54-55. *I don't remember....before*—A rank lie.

56. *She squints*—She looks obliquely. She has her eyes turned in different directions.

Don't she—Does not she ?

56-57 — Capt. Absolute deliberately misrepresents her to show that even if she is the ugliest girl under the sun, he is prepared to marry her, at his father's command.

62-63. *Blooming, love-breathing seventeen*—A girl aged seventeen, young, beautiful, charming and full of love.

64. *As to that*—As to her beauty.
I am quite indifferent—I don't bother about that.

64-65 *If I can....desire*—If by marrying her I can please you, I don't want more.

66-73 — This speech and the similar ones onwards show Sir Anthony almost madly enthusiastic about Lydia's beauty. It is hardly decent that such language should be used by a father before his son to talk about his son's betrothal. The climax of it all reaches when Sir Anthony says, he has half a mind to marry her himself.

67. *Innocently wild*—Wild-looking eyes have always been considered a mark of beauty and passion. Lydia's eyes looked wild yet innocent.

Not a glance......of love—She glances very expressively and invariably arouses love in those she looks at.

Bashfully irresolute—Shy and nervous.

69. *So deeply......eyes*—She blushes crimson red at the hints that her loving eyes give. The eyes express love and at the thought of that she naturally blushes.

70. *Insinuations*—Indirect suggestions.

Tell-tale—Expressive.

71. *Smiling......discretion*—She smiles as if feeling happy at her wisdom.

72. *Pouting*—Portruding her lips forward.

72-73. *More lovely in sullenness*—She looks lovelier still while showing displeasure in her face.

74. *That's she indeed!......etc.*—That is an aside, not addressed to Sir Anthony. Capt. Absolute is happy at his father's enthusiastic descriptions of Lydia's beauty.

75. *Oh, Jack! Jack!*—As if Sir Anthony is utterly impatient to grab it. Unbecoming expressions they are.

76. *And which is to be mine?*—What laughter would spread in the audience with this beautiful use of anti-climax, Capt. Absolute asks his father to make it absolutely clear whether he has to marry the aunt Mrs. Malaprop or the niece Miss Lydia Languish.

80. *Fly like a rocket*—Go up, in excitement and enthusiasm like fireworks.

81. *When I ran......an empire*—Ironically enough, it is after all revealed that Sir Anthony had done exactly the very things in his young age which he is angry for in his son. Without caring for wealth or property, he had eloped with the beautiful girl of his liking. He asserts that he would have given up an empire to gain his beauty. Naturally it sounds silly to him that his son can accept even ugly Mrs. Malaprop.

83. *Not to please your father, Sir*—The son catches his father at his words and asks an awkward question, making him nervous.

84. *To please my father*—At first Sir Anthony rejects the suggestion outright; then recalling that as father his authority was being put to stake by himself, he tries to put things as comfortably as he can.

87. *Though he......that I am*—My father was not as tender-hearted and forgiving as I am.

89. *I daresay not*—I venture to say, he was really not so indulgent. Ironically spoken.

90-91. *You are not sorry......etc.*—A strange question to ask.

93-94. *Not that......handsome*—I don't mean that I would dislike a beautiful woman.

94. *Recollect*—Recall.

95. *Hinted something......eye etc.*—Capt. Absolute mischievously refers to his father's descriptions of an ugly girl Ref. lines 443 to 449 in Act—II, Scene—I.

96. *Graces*—Beauties. Ironically hinting at the ugly aspects.

97. *Without being very nice*—Without affecting a very refined taste.

97-101. The whole speech is ironical and produces a lot of humour.

98. *Usual number of limbs*—Organs of the body like all other human beings *i.e.* not one-eyed etc.

A limitad quantity of back—Not an excessive quantity of back in the form of humps.

99. *Agreeable*—Pleasing.

100. *Prejudice*—Usual liking of the people.

101. *Affect a singularity*—Show a different taste of my own by preferring one-eyed girl to one having two.

In that article—Eyes.

102. *Phlegmatic sot*—Dull fool.

103. *You'rs an anchorite*—A person of secluded habits or a hermit.

Vile—Evil.

Insensible stock—Like a block of wood having no feelings.

103-4. *You a soldier*—You are not fit to be a soldier.

104. *Walking block*—Moving block of wood.

104. *To dust*—To shake off the dust.

104-5. *I've a great......myself*—Absurdity *par excellence*.

107. *At your disposal*—Under vour command.

108. *Addressing*—Courting and then marrying.

109. *You would have me marry*—You would allow me to marry.

113—*I know your indifference......a lie*—Sir Anthony has at last guessed the truth about his son.

115. *Damn your demure face*—Throw away the mask of innocence.

119-20. *I'm sorry......so mistaken*—I feel unfortunate to see that you are wrongly interpreting my sense of duty and obedience to you.

123. *Directly*—At once.

124. *Promethean torch*—Prometheus, in Greek mythology, helped by Minerva, lit his torch at the chariot of the sun, and so brought fire to earth for the benefit of the men of clay made by him. By this fire men were brought to life. What Sir Anthony here suggests is that the fire of Lydia's eyes shall enkindle the passions of Capt. Absolute and thus make him really a man.

125. *Stark mad*—Wholly mad.

126. *Egad*—By God.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Line 2-4. *How means . . . . judgment*—Faulkland is fully conscious that his unwarranted fault-finding spirit is foolish and mean. Yet he is not able to control himself and as soon as Julia comes, he again iudulges in his ungenerous caprices.

3. *Caption*—Suspicions ; fault-finding.

4-5. *Yet I . . . .point*—I know that I do not give vent to this suspicious tendency of mine in any other matter except in love with Julia.

5. *This one subject*—Love of Julia.
To this one subject—To the object of my love, *i.e.*, Julia.

7. *Fretful*—Complaining.
Madly capricious—Very wrongly whimsical.

8. *Tender honest joy*—The Sentimental lover, Faulkland has all along been emphasizing the 'honesty' of joys. It indicates his suspicious motives.

9. *Sparkled*—Shone.

10. *I was ashamed . . . . .happy*—As if to be happy or unhappy depended upon one's sweet will.

11. *Though I had . . . . upbraiding*—The reference here should be made to Faulkland's meeting with Bob Acres, who gave him the report of Julia's gaiety at dances etc. Since then his suspicions were aroused. He thus had come prepared to criticize Julia for her wantonness, perhaps, but when he saw her in spirits he couldn't do so. Now, waiting for a private meeting with Julia—Sir Anthony being gone—he is getting into his caprice to do so.

12. *Upbraiding*—Criticism ; fault-finding.

13. *Proposed expostulations*—Already decided remonstrations.

13-15. *Yet I must. . . . . . absence*—should definitely know that she has actually been not *so very happy*, as described by Bob Acres, in my absence.

15. *Nimbleness. . . . . .tread*—Light and quick steps.

15-17. *When she thinks. . . . her stay*—While she knows I am waiting impatiently for her. The remark shows that Faulkland is convinced of Julia's love for him.

19. *Contented*—Satisfied.

20-21. *Retrained . . . . third person*—Since we had to keep in check the expression of our love, for Sir Anthony was also present.

24. *Coldness in . . . . salutation*—Some lack of warmth in Faulkland's greetings and courtesies was felt by Julia when they first met at Bath.

25. *'Twas your fancy*—It was only your guess; actually there was nothing so.

I was—He emphasizes the word '*was*' to say that he '*really*' was happy.

26-27. *Sure I had . . . . coldness*—Ironically enough, he had no cause for coldness or fault-finding. That is his sentimental foolishness only. In this sentence he has unconsciously expressed his true nature.

28. *Taken something ill*—Perhaps you have felt offended at something.

30. *Own*—Truly admit.

31. *Here*—At Bath.

32. *Damped*—Chilled ; lessened.

Dwelling much—Describing repeatedly.

35. *Temper*—Disposition.

35-37. *I should regard . . . constancy*—This is the sentimental lover's motto, although quite absurd. He thinks that the two lovers while separated should not have a moment

of happiness, and enjoy nothing or else it would be insincerity to the other's love. Since Julia was known not to be so, Faulkland thought she was not fully loyal to his love.

36. *Treason*—Betrayal.

37. *Constancy*—Firmness in love.

37—39.—This is the typical jargon of the Sentimental Comedy. The sentences of this type weaken the force of this witty comedy and are a blemish in the play. But they have another utility. They render the characters using such language quite ridiculous and thus are a sort of indirect satire. Although *we* take it to be so now ; who knows, the audience of Sheridan's time might have found Faulkland quite normal and serious and might not have smiled at him in the least.

37. *The mutual tear*—The tears shed by the two lovers while they are separated.

38. *Compact*—Agreement between parties.

38-39. *No smile . . . . again*—They would not be happy till they are united.

40. *Cease to tax*—Stop from criticising.

41. *Teasing minute caprice*—The ungenerous habit of finding faults in the petty things.

Idle reports—Fanciful descriptions.

42. *Weigh in your breast*—Affect your mind.
Tried affection—Sincere love, of which there is no lack of proof.

43. *They have . . . . with me*—There was no need to this type of assurance if Bob Acres' reports had no weight with him.

47. *I never . . . . absence*—Even this categorical a vowal would not satisfy Faulkland.

48. *Wear a . . . . content*—Appear to be cheerful.

49. *Faulkland's truth*—Faulkland's sincerity in love.

50. *It were . . . . triumph*—It would give an opportunity to the malicious people to ridicule my true love.

51. *Fixed my heart on one*—Came to love such a person.

51-52. *Who left me . . . .credulity*—Who left me behind to be in misery. (Because of my lover's deserting me to rove about and my foolish belief in his constancy).

53. *Dressed sorrow in smiles*—While I was inwardly unhappy I continued to give a forced smile.

57. *Brute*—Unfeeling animal.

True constancy—Sincere love.

58. *Without such cause from you*—Without any opportunity given by you. Causelessly.

As I will . . . .possible—I think it is impossible that you will ever give me such a cause.

49. *Veering but a point*—Changing even a little in any constancy.

60-61. *May I become . . . . ingratitude*—In that case I may he taken as an example of looseness of conduct and ungratefulness.

60. *Scoff*—Taunt ; gibe.

62. *That last word*—The last word of Julia's preceding speech, *ingratitude.*

Grating—Painful to the ear ; harsh-sounding. He is irritated because his sentimental notions of love get a severe shock to learn that love can be born of gratitude. He does not want Julia to love him out of gratitude, for having saved her life, but only because of her sincere love and attachment to him.

63. *Title*—Claim ; right.

64-65. *Perhaps . . . . thankful heart*—Your love for me might only be an expression of your sincere gratefulness to me for having saved your life.

66. *For what quality . . . . you*—To Julia love can take root in the heart deeply in the long run while the seed might have been planted by some excuse, like her gratitude in this

case. To Faulkland love is something spontaneously born without any sufficient reason and does not depend upon anything mundane. So this natural and rational question of Julia further irritates Faulkland.

67-68. *To regard me . . . . to esteem me*—To love me for any particular quality in my character would be only to respect me and in no way can it be called love. Love considers not gratitude, value, status, money, etc. Similar are the views of Lydia also who would prefer to elope with Beverley so that she loses her money.

69. ***For person***—For my personal appearance.

Deformed—Ugly and disfigured.

69—71. *To be convinced. . . .affection*—So that I am fully satisfied that you do not love me simply because of my beauty.

70. ***There***—My handsome features.

72—74. *Where nature . . . . misplaced*—Where nature has bestowed special care in kindly allowing a man and some features, he should take it as unnecessary, for the beauty of a person is not the true worth of man.

74. *In this vain article*—In this matter of handsomeness of appearance which makes men vain; the vanity of beauty.

75. *Rank above you*—Are more beautiful than you.

75-76. *My heart or not*—My love for you was never guided by my eyes, *i.e.*, the considerations of your handsomeness.

77. *Now this is not well . . . etc.*—Faulkland criticizes Julia again. To him it is not sufficient that physical appearance should have no considerations in love but the lovers should take each other as the most beautiful persons on the earth for love has that capacity of transforming things ugly to the beautiful.

78. *I despise person in a man*—I do not care for physical appearance in a man to be of any value in matters of love.

79. *Though I were. . . . so fair*—If you were truly in love with

me (according to my canons of judgment), you would consider me the most handsome person even if I was an African negro.

Aethiop—African.

80—82. *The contract . . . . privilege*—They were bound in a marriage contract, for Julia's father had desired her to marry Faulkland. Julia remarks that this binding has given Faulkland greater rights than usually belong to a lover. Faulkland is more unkind than a lover would dare be, because he knows that Julia has got to marry him.

83. *Feed*—Make strong.

84. *Justify*—Prove as correct.

I would not . . . . free—I do not want to be freed from the bindings of that contract.

85. *My restraint*—My compulsion to be married to you as provided in the contract.

86—88. *Your high respect . . . . choice*—Your great regard for the solemnity of your father's wish as expressed in the contract, has perhaps bound your feelings to me otherwise, if you were free to choose, you might have selected some better lover than I am.

87. *Fettered*—Chained ; confied.

Inclinations—Wishes ; feelings.

88—90. *How shall I . . . . persevering love*—How am I to feel certain, that you would have made me the object of your faithful love, even if you were not bound by this contract ?

90. *Persevering*—That continues to be constant.

91-92. *Let us be . . . . liberty*—Let us now take ourselves to be perfect strangers to each other and free to love whom soever we like. Even then I would not like to be more free than I am now, *i.e.*, I would like to be bound to your love and my promises.

93—95. *So hasty, Julia ! etc.*—Faulkland wrongly accuses her of being hasty in accepting to be strangers. He misunder-

stands her. While Julia means she would love him even if they were to become strangers that very moment, Faulkland takes it as her desire to be free and accuses her of desiring to be freed. This exasperates Julia beyond measure.

96. *Torture me to the heart* !—Trouble me to the quick. She is disgusted and impatient.

98. *Distress you*—Give you pain.

100-104. *Women are not. . . .the heart*—Women, usually, are not serious enough to consider whether their love is spontaneous or arises merely out of rational considerations, like gratitude or duty to parents etc. Faulkland only wants to judge things according to his own sentimental prejudices.

101. *Separate. . . .affections*—Analyse the cause of their love.

102. *The cold dictates of prudence*—The rational viewpoint as opposed to the impulsive in love affairs.

103. *Pleadings of the heart*—The urge of love.

104-6. *I would not boast. . . .etc.*—When I say that my age, personality and character are such that would create no dislike, *i.e.*, produce a liking for me, I am not boasting.

106-7. *My fortune. . . .in the match*—I have such wealth and property that if ladies love me for it, no one would charge them with indiscretion or foolishness for doing so.

Faulkland is insinuating to see whether Julia has any of these considerations or not. It also shows that Faulkland is proud of his possessions.

107-9. *When love receives. . . .it's mirth*—When love is supported by these rational considerations of gratitude, money etc., its birth as true love is to be questioned by delicate men. Sincerity of love will be questionable wherever the spontaneity of love's birth is replaced by prudence. Faulkland thus suggests that Julia might be having her parents' wish or lure of his beauty and money, as the motive of her love.

110. *Insinuation*—Unfair, indirect criticism. Julia feels

offended with the incorrigible suspicious nature of her lover.

111. *They seem pressing. . . .me*—It seems your indirect hints are meant as an insult to me.

112. *Spare you the. . . .so*—Save you the sorrow of repenting afterwards for having offended and insulted me.

115. *Fastened*—Bolted. Julia has bolted the door from within so as not to allow Faulkland to insult her sincere love any more.

118. *How little. . . .in woman*—That shows Faulkland is not really sorry and repentent.
Resolution—Strength of will.

122. *Too resentful*—(Excessive) anger and bitterness.

123. *Steadiness*—Firmness.

125. *Affect.*—Show outwardly.

127-28. *This is not. . . .obstinacy*—Faulkland interprets everything in his own favour and against Julia. When he thought Julia was coming back, he accused her of lack of '*steadiness*' but when she does show '*steadiness*' in not coming back, he dubs it as '*obstinacy*'.

129. *Barbarous*—Uncivilized, cruel.

130. *Unmanly*—Ungentlemanly.

131. *Just resentment*—Only a moment before it was being *too* resentful'. Abated—Lessened.

133. *Antique virago*—An old, turbulent woman.
Gnawing—Torturous.

134. *Spleen*—Ill-temper.

ACT III. SCENE III

Lines 3-4. *You deserve. . . . of you*—You seem to be worthy of the praise given to you by your father in his letter of introduction to me.

Sir Anthony in his last meeting of reconciliation with his son had asked him to go to Mrs. Malaprop with his letter, to seek an interview with Lydia.

7. *Principal inducement in this affair*—The main attraction in marrying Miss Lydia Languish.

8. *Being allied to Mrs. Malaprop*—It is the opportunity of becoming related to you through marrying Lydia that has induced me to accept this proposal. Thus Capt. Absolute flatters Mrs. Malaprop and softens her. He soon succeeds in extracting out of the 'old tough aunt' the permission to see Lydia alone.

9. *Accomplishments*—Attainments.

Unaffected learnings—Great knowledge of which she is not proud.

10. *No tongue is silent*—Everyone speaks.

11. *You do . . . . honour*—You are doing me a great deal of honour by praising me thus.

14. *Few think . . . . gentlewomen*—Few people agree that at least a little learning, *i.e.* education is suitable for women. She says so for people in those days were really opposed to the education of women. Sir Anthony is one such example.

15-16. *Men have no . . . . beauty*—Men now appreciate more, the less valuable quality of beauty, than learning in women.

But—Except.

18-20. *They think superfluous*—Women themselves like our appreciation of their beauty so much that they consider it useless to add knowledge as one of their charms.

20-21. *The like garden trees . . . blossom*—Just as the trees yield fruit only when their flowers are gone, so do ladies show the fruit of Knowledge only when the flower of beauty in them has withered away. Capt. Absolute indirectly flatters Mrs. Malaprop thus—she might not have beauty now but certainly has the fruit of Learning.

21. *Specious blossom*—Outwardly beautiful flowers. Here it means the physical attractions of youth.

22. *Few, like . . . . at once*—There are very few ladies, who show together the flower (beauty) and the fruit (learning) as is the case with the orange-tree. Only Mrs. Malaprop has that distinction of being like the orange-tree. How much puffed up with vanity, Mrs. Malaprop would have looked at hearing this. Women in general are more susceptible to flattery than men.

24. *Over power me . . . . breeding*—You have overwhelmed me by your courtesies.

26. *Giddy*—Frivolous.

Contrived—Conceived ; managed.

27. *To fix her affections*—To fall in love with.

Beggarly—Poor like a beggar.

Strolling—Vagabond.

28. *Eaves-dropping*—One who stands near the door to overhear other's conversation. Perhaps she means the lovers' custom of standing under the beloved's window and singing of her charm.

30. *Silly affair*—The foolish love affair between Lydia and Beverley.

30-31. *I'm not . . . . account*—I do not dislike her because of this affair. How could he, indeed ?

34. *Positive*—Definite.

35. *Never to think on*—To sever connections with.

37-38. *She seems. . .her*—She seems determined to flout every order of mine.

43. *The fellow*—Beverley.

45. *My last note*—My last letter to Lydia which I gave Lucy to be given to Lydia. He guesses that Lucy has betrayed them ; so he calls her 'the devil' !

47. *The little traitress*—The faithless betrayer.

Here Lucy's faithless role is discovered and so she is made to disappear from the play now onwards.

50. *The hand*—Style of writing.

54. *Very tender indeed*—Very loving to be sure.

55. *Profane*—Blasphemous ; irreverent. It is the gods that should be called a devil. To address a mortal thus, is irreverence to gods. Hence Mrs. Malaprop's insinuation.

O' my conscience—I say so truly.

57. *Intelligence*—Information.

60. *The character . . . .honour*—As Beverley he praises Capt. Absolute, so as to prepare Lydia for the discovery later.

62. *Handsome*—Generous.

63. *Design*—Vile motive.

64. *I'll answer for him*—I can admit on his behalf. Ironically true, because he is Beverley himself.

66. *The old. . .guards you*—The old, hardened and watchful woman. He means Mrs. Malaprop who like a dragon keeps watch over Lydia. A dragon is a mythical monster breathing fire, in legends referred as the guardian of treasure or female chastity.

67. *Who can be mean by that ?*—Trying to be deliberately mischievous to tease Mrs. Malaprop.

70. *Impudent scoundrel*—Shameless villain.

71. *Elude her vigilance*—Give her the slip.

72. *Which makes. . .features*—Decorate her ugly appearance with costly fashionable dress.

73. *Deck her. . .words*—Adorn her dull uninteresting conversation.

Don't—Does not.

75. *An attack. . .language*—Which to her is worse than an attack upon her features.

76. *Aspersion*—Attack ; criticism.

76-77. *Parts of speech*—She means an attack on my part which means abilities. "Of speech" is uselessly added. This may also be taken as a case of Malapropism.

77. *Brute*—Coarse, uncultured man.

Quartered—Divided in four parts. Formerly the person executed for high treason was awarded an additional penalty after being hanged, that of his body being divided into four parts.

81. *Same ridiculous vanity*—Absolute tries to repeat the earlier lines to tease Mrs. Malaprop, who is foolish enough not to see it through.

83. *Lay her open*—Is subject to.

84. *The grossest. . . .admiration*—Utterly deceived by flattery and a false praise.

85. *Impudent Coxcomb*—Shameless fool.

So that—Because she can be befooled by flattery.

Scheme—Plan.

86. *With the consent*—With the permission of the ugly old woman—Mrs. Malaprop is again cut to the quick.

Harridan—Vixen ; haggard, old woman.

37. *Go-between*—Intermediary.

85-87—Ironically this is all being done by Capt. Absolute who gets the permission of an interview with Lydia by flattering Mrs. Malaprop.

88. *Assurance*—Impudence ; Shamelessness.

89-91. *Did you eves. . .plot best*—A very good example of dramatic irony. Mrs. Malaprop seems to be plotting

against Beverley to defeat him but does exactly as he wished her to do and is completely duped.

93. *Conceited*—Proud.

94. *Infatuated*—Fascinated ; blindly attached.

95. *Wink at her. . .him*—Show as if you know nothing about the correspondence going on between them.

96. *Let her. . .with him*—Let Lydia arrange to run away with Beverley.

97. *Connive at her escape*—Allow her to elope by pretending to be ignorant of their schemes.

98. *In the nick*—In the nick of the time. At the exact hour. *Laid by the heels*—Overthrown ; made unsuccessful.

99. *Contrive. . .staed*—Manage to take her away myself instead of allowing her to elope with Beverley.

Sheridan himself had a successful elopement to his credit ; so he puts an ingenious plan in the scheming head of Capt. Absolute. The Captain wants to run away with Lydia in order to satisfy her whim and at the same time give an impression to Mrs. Malaprop that he as Capt. Absolute has saved Lydia from Beverley. After a successful secret marriage that truth can be disclosed without much shock to anyone.

101. *Anything*—Any plan or scheme.

103. *Try her temper*—Acquaint myself with her disposition and see how she reacts to me.

104. *I doubt she is not*—I doubt if she is prepared for such a visit.

105. *A visit of this kind*—When a suitor is to visit her for asking her consent in marriage.

Decorum—Social formalities.

107. *She won't mind me*—For a moment Capt. Absolute seems to be forgetting that he has not to play Beverley before Mrs Malaprop. He therefore says that Lydia would not mind me—her Beverley. He, however, soon collects himself.

110. *Gently good tongue*—He asks his tongue not to move so fast so as to bertay him.

113. *By way of jest*—As a tricky joke.

116. *The fellow*—Beverley in his letter.

117. *Let him if he can*—She challenges Beverley to get her permission to see Lydia. What a great irony that he does see her !

121. *His impudence*—The shamelessess of Beverley is to be laughed at.

125. *She shall know. . .on her*—Her instinct of authority is at last aroused and she decides to compel Lydia to see Capt. Absolute and not Beverley.

127. *As becomes a. . .woman*—As is proper in a cultured lady.

129. *For the present. . .servants*—Mrs. Malaprop uses the language of great courtesy in taking leave of Capt. Absolute to bring Lydia to him.

133. *There off all disguise*—Reveal myself as Capt. Absolute. *Seize my price. . . security*—Marry safely my Lydia as Capt. Absolute.

134. *To undeceive her. . .lose her*—If it is known that I am rich Capt. Absolute and not her poor Ensign Beverley, her sentimental whim would be shattered and she may decide to reject me altogether.

137. *What a scene. . .through*—What an unwelcome situation have I to face, where I shall have to listen to the addresses of a stranger ! It, however, turns out to be a very pleasant situation for the stranger is most welcome as Beverley.

138. *To be obliged*—To be compelled.

139. *Loathsome addresses*—Hateful love-expressions.

Stranger to one's heart—Who is unknown ; or whom I am not in love with.

140. *Persecuted*—Harassed.

Who have. . . . . . .his rival—An idea picked up from

among the romances. She imagines a situation where she might have to appeal to the new suitor to resign his claim in favour of the earlier one whom she loves. In this case Lydia might ask Capt. Absolute to give up his suit in favour of Beverley. A similar incident took place in the life of Mrs. Sheridan also when her suitor Mr. Long responded to her appeal and withdrew his claim.

142. *There stands the hated rival . . . . .etc.*—She imagines the interview to come shortly.

144. *Don't*—(Vulgar) Does not.

145. *Negligent wooer*—She has just entered the room where Capt. Absolute is waiting for her. She finds him looking at the pictures with his back towards the entrance, and naturally concludes that he was not eager enough to be looking at the door. Hence her remark at this new lover seems to be a careless one. Capt. Absolute, however, had done it on purpose.

Upon my word—Truly speaking.

150. *Astonished*—To see him there in such an unexpected manner.

Terrified—Lest Mrs. Malaprop might detect her meeting with Beverley.

151. *Overjoyed*—To meet her lover in such a romantic manner after duping the chaperon.

154. *Contriving*—Managing.

Have him kept away—Having him engaged and detained elsewhere.

154-55. *Have passed . . . .on her*—Have made her believe that I am Capt. Absolute.

156. *Oh, charming*—The incurably romantic girl is Lydia. She finds Absolute's duping her aunt and meeting her secretly a very charming idea.

159. *Forbear*—Check myself from.

160. *Sagacity is overreached*—How have you been able to cheat her, who is so proud of her cleverness.

161. *Trifle with*—Using unwisely or carelessly.

163. *Conjure*—Appeal solemnly to.

Condescending—One who can waive his superiority to show favour.

Fix the time—For elopement.

164. *Rescue her . . . .persecution*—Save her from Mrs. Malaprop who harasses and tortures her undeservingly. Sheridan also did exactly the same. He ran away with Miss Linley to rescue her from the persecuting suitors. Such was the social background of the times when people thought it proper to save young girls from their cruel guardians and allow them to marry the man of their choice.

165. *With a licensed. . . . .reward*—You having permitted me to love you, I would then, after eloping with you, ask you to marry me and thus give me my reward—your hand.

166. *Forfeit*—Lose ; give up.

167. *Paltry*—Small ; insignificant.

That burden. . . . .love—Wealth is only a hindrance to the free flight of love. At least Lydia thinks so and that is why she asks Beverley not to care for the wealth she would lose as a result of marriage without Mrs. Malaprop's consent.

170. *Portion*—Dowry ; wealth.

172-71. *It is the. . . . . . . .repay*—I, being poor, cannot compare with you in riches. It is only the warmth of love that I can return for your love. Capt. Absolute uses this romantic jargon to satisfy the whims of Lydia.

173-74. *How persuasive. . . . . .with him*—Here again we see Lydia indulging in one of her foolishly romantic fancies. Without having ever experienced the onslaughts of poverty she pays an absurd tribute to it.

175-185. The whole speech is couched in words designed to affect Lydia favourably. The notion of the worship of love and abjuring of worldly wealth are the integral parts of Lydia's romantic character, which Capt. Abso-

lute is clever enough to know and show in himself also. That is why at the end of this speech (Line 186), he exclaims that if Lydia can still resist from eloping with him and yielding to his proposal of marriage, then the devil himself might be working against his plans.

175-76. *Love. . . . . .Support*—Love, shall be the god we will worship and love alone will be able to sustain us in our distress.

177. *Monastic strictness*—With that spirit of regular self-sacrifice which monks or nuns follow in monasteries.

Abjuring all worldly toys—Not enjoying the luxuries of the world that are as insignificant things as toys for us.

178. *There*—At love.

178-79. *Proud of calamity*—Whatever trouble comes upon us due to our loving each other, shall only make us more proud that we sacrificed everything for love.

179. *Wreck*—Destruction ; loss.

180-81. *Surrounding. . . . . .bright*—The darkness of poverty all around us will let the flame of love, look still more bright. If we willingly embrace poverty, the sincerity of our love will still be greater.

182. *Fling*—Throw away ; give up.

All goods of fortune—Wealth and property or anything else that can be counted among riches

182-83. *With a prodigal hand*—Extravagantly.

184-85. *The world. . . .here*—All my happiness is in Lydia and in nothing else. The remark would have sounded well in Faulkland's mouth also.

187. *Fly with him*—Run away with him.

Antipodes—The other side of the world.

188. *But my. . . .a crisis*—Another absurdly romantic whim of Lydia. Unless she has been tortured to the extreme and brought to the greatest risks, there is no fun in running away and rescuing herself. She thinks that the climax of misery has not yet come to her ; so she would rather delay the elopement.

Stage Direction : *Listening*—Eaves-dropping.

190. *Deports herself*—Conducts herself in her interview with Capt. Absolute.

191. *Pensive*—Thoughtful.

Is then. . . .abated—Has your warmth of love lessened ?

192-93. *She has. . . . . . suppose*—Mrs. Malaprop interprets Capt. Absolute's words "Is then your warmth abated"? in her own context. She thinks that she has been indulging in the warmth of anger and Absolute is only hoping that her temper has now cooled down.

195-96. *She'll be. . . .life*—Mrs. Malaprop continues to misinterpret. Lydia has only said that her warmth of love would continue all her life, while Mrs. Malaprop understands that Lydia is asserting to be angry with Capt Absolute all her life and is thus rejecting his suit.

The whole scene becomes utterly ambiguous and funny as it would be in a comedy of errors. Lydia thinks she has duped her aunt. Mrs. Malaprop thinks she has over-reached Beverley and Cap. Absolute has really befooled both the aunt and the niece.

202. *Assurance*—Impudence. Mrs. Malaprop thinks that Lydia is rejecting Capt. Absolute by saying so to his face, while Lydia had only addressed her Beverley.

304. *Thus then*—Capt. Absolute kneels down and asks Lydia to accept his suit.

205-6. *Down on. . . .pity*—The kneeling down of Beverley is interpreted by Mrs. Malaprop as an appeal for pitying him—Capt. Absolute.

206. *Contain*—Check myself.

207. *Vixen*— A quarrelsome woman.

208. *Confound her vigilance*—Capt. Absolute thinks that the reality about them has been found out.

Vigilance—Alertness.

209-10. The speech reveals at once that Mrs. Malaprop still does not know the truth about Capt. Absolute. She

apologiess to him on her niece's behalf. The Captain at once clearly saves the situation and over-reaches both the aunt and the niece ag in.

215. *She is as . . . . . Nile*—As violently self-willed as an alligator on the banks of Nile.

216. *Nile*—A river in Egypt.

217. *Charge me with*—Accuse me of.

218. *Unblushing*—Shameless.

220. *Didn't you say . . . . etc.*—A question interpreted differently by Lydia and Mrs. Malaprop for she asks about Capt. Absolute, while Lydia's reply is about Beverley when she says that she did not say so. (Line 221).

223-24. *Lying . . . .woman*—As if it becomes others.

228. *Hold !—hold*—Stop. Desist from speaking any more.

232. *Not hurt me in the least*—Very true, but the irony is that Mrs. Malaprop cannot even guess the fact. As Beverley, he would rather welcome such talk than be hurt by it.

233. *Amiably*—Lovably.

235. *What we have fixed*—What we have planned earlier amongst ourselves. (The plan to let Beverley elope with Lydia and her being saved from his clutches by Capt. Absolute).

237. *Graceful*—According to manners, Lydia actually does it.

242. *Come along*—Addressed to Capt. Absolute.

ACT III. SCENE IV

Stage Direction. *As just dressed*—Acres is a country-gentleman who used to dress himself according to country fashions. These country gentlemen were usually ridiculed by the city-bred gentlemen to whose standard of fashion they could not come. Acres thinks that his failure with Lydia was perhaps due to his old-fashioned dress. So he has now dressed himself according to the latest city fashions and seems to be feeling very proud of it. His servant David is also much affected by his master's newly acquired elegance.

Line 1. *Do you think I become it so*—Do you think the new dress suits me well?

2. *You are . . . . . creature*—You appear to be entirely a different person in your new fashionable clothes.

3. *By the mass*—An oath. Mass is a religious celebration among the Christians.

   An'—If.

4. *Devon Monkerony*—Macaroni from Devon. Devon was the place Acres came from. Macaroni was the contemporary name for fops and dandys. This meaning came to be acquired by the word because there was a Macaroni club whose members were of foppish habbits. They had given that name to their club because the members ate Italian food, among which macaroni was a famous article—a sweet made from wheat flour.

   Print shops in Bath—Shops of the printed cloth in Bath. It was customary with these shops to sell the caricatures of the well-known macaronis. David suggests that Bob Acres will soon become a famous macaroni from Devon

and his style and print of cloth will be sold in the Bath print-shops.

5. *Dress does . . . .difference*—It is sure that a man becomes quite a different personality in a new dress, *i.e.*, is improved much by it.

6. *'Tis all in all*—Dress does not make a difference only, it is everything.

7. *Clod Hall*—This is how Bob Acres' house in Devonshire was named.

The odd lady—Bob Acre's mother.

8. *Wouldn't know you*—Would not be able to recognize you ; you have so much changed with your new dress on.
Master Butler—A butler is the head-servant in a rich household. Hence called master.

9. *Mrs. Pickle*—A maid-servant of Acre's household.
"*Lard preserve me*"—Lord preserve me!

10. *Dairy maid*—The maid-servant in charge of the cows.
Giggling—Laughing.

11. *I warrant*—I am sure.

Dolly Tester—The name of Acres's favourite horse.

12. *Would blush . . . ..waistcoat*—Feeling proud of his master, the horse would blush as crimson as the colour of my waistcoat. It suggests that the horse must have been white.

Oons—Zounds. God's wounds. An oath.

Hold a gallon—Bet a gallon of wine which I would hold within me, *i.e.*, drink.

13. *An't*—Is not.

But would bark—The dogs would bark because they will not be able to recognise their master.

14. *Phillis*—The name of a dog.

Wag a hair of her tail—Phillis would be so surprised to see Acres in the new dress that she would forget to shake her tail in joy.

15. *Polishing*—Becoming elegant and smart as now with a new dress.

16-17. *So says . . . . .heeds me*—So do I tell your shoe-boy to polish your shoes well but he never cares for my instructions. David is a servant of a country-gentleman and cannot claim the attainments of Fag. He takes his master's word 'polishing' to mean polishing of the shoes.

18. *Mrs. Dela grace*—A suitable name given by Sheridan to the French dancing master. Since Bob Acres was trying to ape everything fashionable in the city, he was also taking lessons from this master, in dancing.

19. *Rub up*—Practise and improve.

Balancing, chasing, boring—They are the terms indicating various movements in the fashionable French dances.

Balancing—Setting and moving conversely with one's partner.

Chasing—(Chass's): Making a gliding step by bringing one foot forward.

Boring—(Borce). Another graceful movement in dancing.

20. *I'll call again*—I will call on the dance-master and ask him to come to you.

23—25. *I can't help . . . . . .again myself*—David remarks that the new hair-style of his master is not striking and has so changed him that he cannot resist the temptation of looking at him again and again. That is overwhelming praise indeed. The metaphor of 'cooking' used by David refers to Acres' hair cut by the barber and the 'dish' is nothing but his head. David says that if he had not been present at the barber's shop when his master was having new hair-dressing, he would have died without ever knowing that it was his master's head after all.

28. *Sink, Slide, Coupie*—Movement in dancing. *Sinking* is gradually coming lower down ; *sliding* is moving with easy smooth steps and *Coupie* is a movement in which a dancer rests on one foot and brings the other foot forward and backward.

26-27. *Confound the...cotillion*—Damn the people that invented this dance. Acres finds a lot of difficulty in practising the various movements, so he gets disgusted and damns the inventors of the dance.
Cotillion—A dance of four to eight persons involving brisk movements. Now a complex dance including many dances in itself.

27. *They are as bad as algebra*—There is no need for a country-gentleman to bother his head about learning algebra. So it is worthless for them to learn these fashionable dances.

28. *Minuet*—A kind of slow dance.

29. *When I am forced*—When it is unavoidable. Even minuet he wouldn't welcome to dance unless compelled to do it.

29-30. *Accounted....stick*—Considered a somewhat stiff dancer.

30. *Odds jigs and tabors*—Acres' original oath about dances. *Jig* is a lively dance and *tabor* is a small drum to accompany a pipe.

30-31. *I never couple*—I never cared for this movement in dancing.

31-32. *Figure in.....left*—Moving this way and that in dancing.

32. *I'd foot it country*—I can dance it as well as any Captain in my district.

33. *Outlandish*—Foreign dances brought from outside of England.

Heathen—Unchristian ; uncultured.

Allemandes—German dances.

34. *Quite beyond me*—I cannot manage to learn.

Prosper at 'em—Be good at them.

35. *True-born English legs*—His being the legs of a true Englishman he can dance English dances but cannot get to the foreign ones.

36. *Curst*—Cursed ; damned.
Lingo—Foreign language. French term used in teaching their dances.

Pas—French word for 'step'.

38. *My feet....paws*—Acres pronounces the French '*pas*' like English 'paws' and hence remarks that he wouldn't like calling his steps paws—the feet of animals like dogs.

38-39. *I have most.....toes*—My toes, *i.e.*, foot is strictly anti-French. That is why I am not able to learn the French dances like *allemandes* or cotillion, while I can dance all the English country dances.

42. *To embrace you*—As an indication of affectionate greeting.

43. *I kiss your hands*—An equally ceremonius reply from Acres as from Sir Lucius. Both the gentlemen affect manners and use greeting phrases used in high society.

46. *Cupid's*—Of the god of love.

Jack-a lantern—Will-o'-the-wisp. Here it would mean a mirage of love. Acres has come to Bath for Lydia's hand.

47. *Quagmire*—Marshy land. Hence in a difficult situation. He had come to Bath as a suitor for Lydia's hand but Mrs. Malaprop has now rejected his suit. Hence his quagmire.

48. *Ill-used*—Badly treated.

48-49. *To mention names*—To tell the names of the persons, who have treated me badly.

50. *What is the case*—What are the details of the matter you are referring to.

51. *Mark me*—Listen to me attentively.

52. *A young lady*—Lydia. Acres has already said that he would not mention names. If he did, the fun would be gone because Sir Lucius is also involved in the case.

52. *Her friends*—Mrs. Malaprop.

53. *World*—News.

54. *To be. ..of*—To be married to some other person. Dispose of hints at the contemporary attitude towards women—as if they were material articles to be handed over to anyone.

56. *Upon my conscience*—I say so truly.

57. *Divine*—Guess.

58. *There's the matter*—This is exactly what should have been the matter.

60. *Odds slanders and lies*—Acres seems to be thinking that Beverley must have used all sorts of lies and slanders about him and put him in disfavour. That is why be swears—in his typical fashion again—in the name of slanders and lies that fit in with his context.

60. *At the bottom of it*—The cause of my dismissal.

62. *Supplanted you unfairly*—Replaced you in the favour of the lady, in an unjust manner, thus giving a cause for offence.

63-64. *He never. . . .fairly*—Acres' over-confidence.

65. *Then sure. . . .done*—Then you know perhaps that you have to challenge your rival in a duel to redress your grievance.

Duelling came to England from France in the 16th century and continued to be a method of vindicating one's honour, with the aristocracy and the army. It was, however, illegal.

67-68. *We wear. . . .swords*—We are not allowed to wear swords here at Bath. The fashion was disallowed in Bath for fear of duels.

69. *What! fight him!*—Acres is shocked to think of fighting a duel.

71. *Provocation*—Cause for offence.

74. *Heinous offence*—Odious or atrocious wounding of feelings.

76. *Breach of friendship*—Deceiving a friend. Sir Lucius says that since breach of friendship provided a fit case for duelling, Acres should do so. But Sir Lucius is foolish enough to forget that there was not even an acquaintance between Acres and Beverley ; so there was no question of any friendship or its breach, in this case.

77. *I have no. . . .this man*—I do not know this man Beverley at all. This remark should have shown Sir Lucius the absurdity of his argument but he is undeterred

79-80. *He has less. . . .liberty*—In case he is not even acquainted to you he has the lesser right to come forward as a suitor to your beloved. He means that the fact carries more offence than it would have in case of a friend ; so a greater cause for a duel.

81. *God*—By God.

I grow full of anger—He feels he should pose anger before Sir Lucius to maintain his dignity and so he does. Really he is a coward at heart and cannot afford to feel angry and fight a duel.

82. *I fire apace*—I grow more and more angry every moment. *Odds hilts and blades*—He swears in the name of the parts of a sword, since he will have to fight a duel with a sword.

83. *A man may. . . . . .know it*—A man may not know about the amount of courage in him unless reminded by someone else. In this case Acres never knew he was really so brave as to fight a duel unless Sir Lucius hinted at it.

How ridiculous must have Acres appeared with the remark and what laughter he might have produced. This scene has been couched on the lines of a scene in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, in which Sir Toby Belch excites a foolish country landlord Sir Andrew Aguecheek to fight a duel. Bob Acres has been planned on the lines of Sir Andrew Aguecheek who like Acres was also learning fashions and dances common in the city-bred high society in order to please his mistress. There is, however, one difference between the two situations. In *Twelfth Night*, Sir Toby excites Aguecheek knowing full well about his foolishness and doing so only to extract a lot of fun but Sir Lucius is here deadly in earnest and is ignorant about the reality of Bob Acres' character.

84. *But couldn't. . . . . .my side*—Can I not manage somehow to justify my stand if I challenge him in a duel. Acres is

not yet fully convinced of the justification of fighting a duel with Beverley.

86. *What the devil . . . . concerned*—Sir Lucius gets angry at the shakiness of Acres and remarks that it is foolish to think of justification when his honour is involved in the case. The injury to honour is enough cause for challenging him in a duel.

87. *Achilles*—A famous general in the Greek army that fought with the army of Troy.

88. *My little Alexander the great*—The great conqueror and the King of Macedonia. He conquered all the countries from Greece to India. He is called "my little Alexander" as an indication of familiarity, by Sir Lucius.

89. *Broad-swords*—Swords with broad blades.

89-90. *They drew of it*—The brave Greeks like Achilles and Alexander never fought for right and wrong but attacked their enemies if they found themselves strong enough. Sir Lucius hints that brave men never care for rightness of things for they can do what they like. It is the coward, who cannot bring about a change as they wish, plead for the justice of things.

91. *A grenadier's march*—The tall, brave soldiers, whose regiment led the march to a battle, were called grenadiers. It was their function to throw grenades on the enemy. To Acres, Sir Lucius' remarks sound like war music with which grenadiers are inspired while going to a battlefield. Acres also now feels inspired to fight.

92. *Catching*—Infectious. The courage in Sir Lucius' language has emboldened him.

93. *Rising as it were*—He is not sure whether courage *is* really rising.

94. *Odds flints, pans and triggers*—These are the different parts of a pistol with which he would fight a duel.

Flint—A piece of hard substance used with steel to produce fire in a flint-lock gun.

Pan—A part of lock that held the priming in obsolete types of gun.

Trigger—The projecting tongue in firearm that liberates hammer of lock.

96. *Blunderbus Hall*—Sir Lucius' ancestral home which has now slipt through his fingers. Since Sir Lucius has been rendered poor, the ancestral property is gone but not the pride and honour.

97. *Range of ancestry*—The portraits of my ancestors ; the line of ancestry.

98. *That would furnish*—Portraits hung on the walls of the room.

The New room—The New Assembly Hall in Bath.

99. *Had killed his man*—Had killed his adversary in a duel, thus giving their proof of valour and honour.

100. *Mansion house*—Large house belonging to a country landlord.

Dirty acres—The great amount of landed property which has now been lost.

Have slipt fingers—Have got out of my possession.

101-102. *The family . . . . as ever*—The portraits of my ancestors have been carefully preserved by me. (The aristocrats used to attach a great sentimental value to their family portraits. The idea has been exploited to good use by Sheridan in 'The School for Scandal'.)

104. *Militia*—The citizens' army. Acres does not want to remain behind Sir Lucius in bragging.

105. *Odds balls and barrels*—Another original oath from Acres. Balls and barrels are both part of gun to be used in a duel.

Say no more—There is no need now to inspire me for I am now resolved to fight.

Braced for it.—Made determined to fight a duel.

106-107. *The thunder . . . . my breast*—There is a common superstition that the fierce sound of thunder can turn the milk in the mother's breasts, sour. So Acres remarks that the thunderous words of bravery from Sir Lucius have changed his usual kindliness to anger for his adver-

sary. "The milk of human kindness" is the phrase borrowed from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, where Lady Macbeth remarks of her husband that he is "too full of the milk of human kindness."

107-8. *"As the man . . . . .deeds"*—The reference is to *Hamlet*, wherein Hamlet in Act III, Scene II, says :—

> "Now I could drink hot blood,
>
> And do such bitter business," . . . . .etc.

Acres means that just as Hamlet was determined to do brave deeds to revenge himself, so is he angry enough to challenge his rival Beverley in a duel and kill him.

109-10. *There must be . . . . . . .the case*—Sir Lucius asks Bob Acres not to feel angry with his rival but challenge him with civility.

110. *These things*—Challenging in a duel.

Civilly—Politely.

Sir Lucius never cares whether it is polite at all to fight a duel for nothing but is full of propriety to do it civilly.

111-13. *I must be . . . . .love me*—Acres '*must be*', and not '*is*' in a rage. That is the absurdity of his boast and feigned passion.

113. *Here's pen and paper*—To write to my rival challenging him for a duel.

114. *I would . . . .red*—He wishes to have written the note in red ink, signifying the colour of blood which he would spilt.

Indite—Compose ; put in words.

115. *Odds bullets and blades* Swearing by the bullets (pistols) and blades (swords)—the two weapons to be used in their duel.

115-16. *I'll write . . . . .however*—I would write a big bold hand to indicate my boldness. An absurd idea to be sure.

117. *Compose*—Keep cool. Quieten.

119. *Damme*—Damn me. An oath.

120. *Pho ! pho !*—Indicates disapproval.

Do the thing decently—Write your letter in a decent manner worthy of high society.

121. *Like a christian*—Like an enlightened cultured person. Or as a Christian without using oaths, which indicate profanity.

122. *That's . . . . by half*—It is much more civil than it should be.

The portions in italics indicate the language of the letter of challenge as dictated to Bob Acres by Sir Lucius

123. *Confusion*—Misunderstanding.

125. *Addressing*—Counting.

128. *I shall expect . . . . .etc.*—The polite form of a challenge for a duel. It sounds exactly as if the person was being invited to an evening party or dinner as Acres at once angrily remarks.

130. *Pray be easy*—Don't get into a passion. It should be as I am telling you.

132. *To settle our pretensions*—To decide whose claim is the right one to woo the lady.

Pretensions—claims.

134. *King's Mead-fields*—The name of the place where he would like to fight the duel. The fighting of duel being illegal, the place must be a little away from the highway etc. King's Mead-fields were on the west side of the city of Bath and were originally a part of royal landed property. Hence the name.

137. *My own crest . . . . .seal*—I shall seal the letter with my own insignia which indicates a hand holding a dagger. The seal is also significant because it has the suggestion of a brave fight in it. The practice of keeping private seals by the noblemen of aristocratic families, was officially allowed in those days.

138. *This little explanation*—The reason for challenge as indicated in the letter.

141. *Ay, we fight . . . . misunderstanding*—Acres only repeats Sir Lucius' words without in the least understanding what he is hinting at. Bob is not yet sure whether there is a sufficient reason for a duel.

142. *I'll leave . . . . time*—The time when the rival is to present himself for the duel has not been indicated in the letter. So he asks Acres to decide the time according to his convenience.

144-45. *Then let the worst.........to-marrow*—Even if the worst happen, *i.e.*, you are killed or badly wounded, the oppression in your mind would be removed by to-morrow.

147-48. *Unless it . . . . letter*—Unless you write to me to see you.

148. *I would do . . . . message*—The very polite language of Sir Lucius. He offers to carry the letter of challenge to Beverley himself.

150. *Just such another affair*—I might also have to fight a duel with a rival. Sir Lucius has been corresponding with Delia (Mrs. Malaprop) taking her to be Lydia, who, he has come to know, is being courted by Capt. Absolute also. Thus Capt. Absolute will be his rival in a duel.

A very interesting complication has thus started. Both Acres and Sir Lucius are intending to fight the same person for the sake of the same lady without ever knowing of it. If they knew it, they would themselves be the rivals. Sir Lucius only hints that he has to fight a captain and does not give out the name which would have finished the whole game.

151. *Gay captain*—Rich and happy go-lucky sort of person. *Put a jest on me*—Made a joke against me. Note that Sir Lucius thinks he would have to fight a duel although what the captain has done is only a trifle jest.

152. *At the expense. . . .country*—The jest was that the captain had ridiculed Sir Lucius' country—Ireland. Irish people are more than usual sensitive about their country's honour.

153. *To fall in*—To meet.

To call him out—To challenge him in a duel.

154. *Valour*—Boldness ; courage.

I should like . . . . first—Bob Acres is afraid in the heart of heart and wants to avoid a duel if he honourably can. He asks Sir Lucius to fight first. Thus he would be able to postpone the thing for the time being at least.

156. *To get a little lesson*—I would like you to kill your adversary so that I can learn how to fight a duel.

157. *Instructing you*—Teaching you the art of duelling. Sir Lucius himself is not brave enough to fight ; so he side tracks this matter and asks Acres to prepare for his duel. Sir Lucius being a man of honour finds that the first and foremost instruction that he can give to Acres, is to keep within the bounds of social etiquette while participating in a duel.

159. *Antagonist*—Adversary ; rival.

Mild—Polite.

Agreeable—Pleasant.

160-61. *Let your courage . . . . sword*—Your courage should be keen and polished like your sword. The sword is to be keen-pointed ; the keen courage means intensive boldness. Polished sword moves smooth ; but the polish in courage would mean polite and civil manners even when dealing with the enemy.

ACT IV. SCENE I

Line 1. *By the mass*—It seems to be the favourite oath of David.

No such thing—As his master is going to do—that of fighting a duel.

3. *Make me fight*—Should be able to force me to fighting a duel.

When I wa'n't so minded—When I myself did not want to fight.

Oons—God's wounds. An oath favourite of David.

4. *The old lady*- Bob Acres' mother.

This speech of David shows that his master must have cofessed to him his disinclination to fight, while Sir Lucius had induced him to do it. David is resenting such a passive attitude of Acres.

6. *Odds sparks and flames*—Acres' oath that refers to the passionate spirit of his anger.

8. *Not he, indeed*—Sir Lucius would not have succeeded in egging me on to a duel.

I hates—(vulgar) I hate.

9. *Cormorants*—A big and voracious sea-bird about three feet in length. Hence a rapacious or greedy person. David so describes Sir Lucius since being greedy of splitting blood he has instigated Acres to fight a duel. *Look'ee*—Look you.

A bout—A fight.

10. *Quarter staff*—A short stout pole 6 to 8 in feet length formerly used by peasantry as a weapon.

Short-staff Any small short staff, shorter in length than the quarter staff. These are the weapons David might have seen and used in the country-side. So he speaks only of them and not of swords and pistols which he is afraid of.

11. *To bid you cry off*—To ask you to withdraw from the duel.

11-12. *Sharps and snaps*—Swords and pistols. A sword is sharp and a pistol's shot goes off suddenly (snaps).

12. *I never knew . . . . of 'em*—I have never heard that these weapons did any good to anybody except harming him.

13. *But my honour . . . . etc.*—This is how Acres was roused by Sir Lucius. A great sentimental value was attached to this idea of one's honour. To David, however, this appeal to honour does not appear sensible at all.

16-17. *I think in . . . .of me*—I shall certainly like to take care of my honour but my honour should also be careful of me be seeing to it that I do not lose anything, much less my life, in defending it (honour).

18. *Odds blades*—He swears by the blade of a sword.

19. *Risk the loss of his honour*—No gentleman would like to do anything that would put his honour in danger.

20-21. *It would be but . . . . gentleman*—It would be proper for honour also not to risk a gentleman's life in its defence. David is more realistic in his attitude to life than his master.

21-22. *This honour . . . . false friend*—To David honour looks like a false friend because for its sake a man might lose even his life.

23. *A very courtier-like servant*—Honour is like a courtier in its nature. Just as a courtier is dependent upon a king and shines or fades with him, so does honour with the gentleman having it.

Put the case—See at this matter.

23-24. *I was a gentleman*—Suppose I am an honourable gentleman.

24. *Which thank . . . . of me*—I am thankful to God, no one

would agree to call me a gentleman. If I were so, I would have to fight duels to keep my honour.

25-26. *My honour .... acquaintance*—I have to fight a duel to defend my honour.

26-27. *Pleasant enough that*—Things may be taken to be as pleasant up till now in this case. He says so ironically for fighting in no way can be a pleasant thing.

27. *The more's my luck*—I would call myself lucky if I kill my rival.

28. *Why, my honour*—By killing a man I get no profit ; only I can flatter myself that my honour has been vindicated.

29-30. *I go to the worms ..... enemy*—If am I killed in the duel I would be buried deep in the grave and be eaten by the worms, whereas my honour would also gain nothing by it. On the other hand whatever honour I now possess would also go to my enemy.
Whips over—Suddenly passes over.

31-32. *Odds, crowns and laurels*—Acres swears by the articles indicating honour and victory for he thinks even when you die defending your honour, you remain great and worth the crowns and laurels.

33-34. *That's just .... without it*—I would not like to go to the grave even if I have to do so without honour. To his commonsense what is the utility of honour when he is dead and gone and cannot enjoy it.
Make a shift—Manage.

35-36. *It doesn't .... to you*—It is not proper for an honourable and brave man like myself to listen to your arguments that blacken honour and valour.

36-37. *Shall I disgrace my ancestors*—Shall I withdraw from the duel and thus by showing cowardice bring dishonour to my forefathers.

39. *Under favour*—If you will excuse me for that I would like to say that ......

39-40. *The surest .... company*—The best way to serve your ancestors is not to die and be with them but to remain alive and stay back.

41. *In such haste*—So early.

42. *An ounce of lead . . . . brains*—Shot by a bullet in your head.

44. *Well be let alone*—Be not allowed to happen. Be left aside.

43-45. *Our ancestors . . . . with*—Even if I accept that my ancestors were very good people I would not like to die and go to them.

46-47. *You don't think . . . . danger*—Acres is now in his true colours, frightened by the talk of death. He wants to know if there is a real danger of death in a duel. What he has in his mind is—if there *is* real danger of death, he would better not fight.

48. *Without any mischief done*—Without any great harm to them ; or, without dying.

49. *It is ten to one against*—There are only ten per cent chances of your being saved from death.

50. *Lion-headed*—He means lion-hearted.

51. *Double-barrelled swords*—Double-barrelled guns.

52. *Cut and thrust pistols*—Cut and thrust swords. Swords that cut sharply.

The three above misuses of the words make them look like examples of Malapropism.

52-53. *It makes me . . . . of it*—I am shocked to imagine how ghastly it would be if you are killed.

53 54. *Those be . . . . weapons*—Swords and pistols are such dangerous weapons in the hands of desperate and bloody-minded people. A case of transferred epithets.

54. *Abide them*—Tolerate them.

55. *From a child . . . . fancy 'em*—Since my childhood days I could never persuade myself to like them.

55. *An't*—Has not.

56. *Merciless a beast*—Cruel wild animal. He calls a pistol a beast.

58. *I won't be afraid*—That shows he is really very much afraid but is trying to show as if he is not.

Odds fire and fury—Fire and fury of anger.

59. *Here is the challenge*—Acres produces the letter dictated by Sir Lucius.

60. *You carry it*—You pass it over to Beverley.

62. *In the name of mischief*—Keeping in mind the mischief or danger it will produce.

63-64. *Wouldn't lend. . . . .stable*—I would not help you in fighting a duel even if you agree to hand me over your best horse.

65. *Like another letter*—Like other common letters. Different from other letters.

Designing—Scheming to kill.

66. *Malicious*—Evils because it talks of killing.

67. *Pouch*—A soldier's small bag to carry gun-powder in.

67-68.. *I wouldn't. . . . . .go off*—I should not be surprised if it (the letter) explodes like the gun-powder in a pouch.

69. *Poltroon*—Coward.

70. *Grasshopper*—An insect.

71. *'t will be sad news*—The news of your fighting a duel will make people sad at your country-residence.

72. *Clod Hall*—Acres' country-house.

73. *I have done*—I have nothing nore to say.

Phillies—Acres' bitch.

75. *Old Crop*—Acres' horse.

Field and road—Over fields in hunting expeditions and over roads while travelling.

(S.D.) *Whimpering*—Making feeble, frightened sounds ; crying softly.

77. *It won't do*—I shall not be deterred from my decision to fight, by your attempt to make me afraid.

78. *Get alcng*—Go soon.

While I'm in the mind—While my resolve to fight is intact.

81 *Heaven send*—May God do so.

83. *Provoke*—Irritate me.

85. *Dastardly*—Skulker.

85-86. *Croaking raven*—Raven is a black crow, the crowing of which is considered very inauspicious. It usually indicates a coming death. Since David has also been talking of his master's impending death if he fought a duel, he has been called a raven.

87. *What's the matter*—Capt. Absolute finds Acres angry over his servant so he asks what the matter is.

88. *Sheep-hearted*—Timid ; coward like a sheep.

Blockhead fool.

89. *St. George and the dragon*—St. George is the patron-saint of the English people He fought a dragon that lived in a pond in Lybia. The dragon had killed many people. Once when it was about to devour a princess, St. George attacked and killed the dragon, which was carried home by the princess as a mark of victory. Acres here remarks that he has much bravery as St. George and the dragon had, being put together.

89. *To boot*—As well as.

91. S.D. *The Challenge*—The letter containing the challenge to Beverley.

92. *What's going on now*—What is the matter with him now ?

98. *Egad*—By God.

98-99. *Wrought me to it*—Has worked upon me to be roused to fight. He means he has still no intention to fight if he can avoid it.

100. *That so much. . . . .wasted*—Acres would fight not because he should but because his noble rage may not be wasted for nothing.

102-3. *As I think. . . . .fellow*—It is clear that Capt. Absolute

must have told Bob Acres about Beverley's love for Lydia.

104. *Mortal defiance*—A deadly challenge. Being a challenge to duel it may result party's death, hence mortal.

105. *He gets it*—Ironically true, for he has got it himself.

110. *What it is. . . . . .friend*—How nice and profitable it is to have friends like you !

111. *My second*—In the code of honour for a duel each party was required to have a friend as his second to see that the duel was frought fairly and according to rules.

112. *Not in this. . . . . .proper*—Since Capt. Absolute was Beverley himself he could not act as Acres' second. So naturally it could not be proper in *this* case.

114. *Get my friend*—Make Sir Lucius my second in the duel.

115. *Your good wishes*—The irony is that Acres is asking the good wishes of the very person he is to fight with.

116. *Whenever he meets you*—I shall give you my good wishes whenever Beverley meets ; which he never might.

117. *Inquiring for*—Asking to see.

119. *Instantly*—Immediately.

My little hero—Spoken with affectionate sarcasm.

120. *Success attend you*—May you succeed in your matter of duel.

121. *Stay—Stay, Jack*—As Beverley starts out, Acres gets nervous for now the letter of challenge might surely be conveyed and the duel come out. So in confusion Acres tells all sorts of threats to Capt. Absolute to be conveyed to Beverley so that he might get afraid and withdraw from the duel.

123. *A devil of a fellow*—As fearful as a devil. Deadly in a fight.

124-25. *A determined dog*—A dangerous and obstinate person.

126. *Ay, do, do*—Yes, please do tell him so.

126-27. *If that. . . . . .come*—This is Acres' plan ; to frighten Beverley so that the duel might not be materialized at all.

127-28. *I generally. . . . . .a week*—There couldn't be a better bragging fellow.

130. *Fighting Bob*—A person who very often fights (although the truth is just the reverse).

131. *'Tis all. . . . . .mischief*—I ask you to frighten him only because I don't want to indulge in killing.

132. *I don't. . . . . .honour*—If I can vindicate my honour otherwise, I would not like to kill him.

133. *That's very kind of you*—It is so kind of you to be so considerate about Beverley's safety. Ironically spoken.

136. *But a devil of a fellow*—Capt. Absolute again reminds of a fellow.

140. *A most devouring rage*—Very fierce passion ; anger that might eat him up, as it were.

ACT IV. Scene II

Line 1. *Perverse*—Obstinate in one's error; different from what is reasonable or required.

1-2. *What you to . . . . . .him*—What objection do you have accepting Capt. Absolute.

3. *Genteel man*—Gentlemanly person.
A pretty figure of a man—Handsome in his physical features.

4. *She life . . . . .praising*—Lydia says that Mrs. Malaprop does not know whom she is praising for according to the story given to Lydia, her Beverley had come that day as Capt. Absolute. Ironically enough Mrs. Malaprop is praising correctly. Lydia herself is in ignorance.

9. *The Capt . . . .seen*—Lydia means that he was not really Capt. Absolute but Beverley.

10. *Well bred*—Brought up in a cultured family.

11. *Has so . . . . .himself*—Has so many good qualities to recommend him. It may also mean that he talks so well, because next she says that he speaks such "good language too."

13. *Presence*—Appearance.
Protest—Truthfully say.

14. *What Hamlet says in the play*—A reference is here made to the speech of Hamlet in the play of the same name by Shakespeare. In Act III, Scene IV Hamlet gives a description of his father, which has been grossly misquoted here. Hamlet says :—

"*Hyperion's* the front of *Jove* himself ;
An eye like *Mars*, to threaten *and* command ;
A station like the *herald* Mercury,
New-lighted on a *heaven-kissing hill*."

The portions in italics have been wrongly quoted by Mrs. Malaprop. Her quotation is sheer nonsense and sounds like a parody.

15. *Hesperian*—About the evening star, Hesperus. The correct word in Shakespeare—Hyperion—is the name of Sun-god.

Curls—Curly hair.

Job—Job is the name of a Jewish patriarch in the Old Testament, who suffered much in his poverty, for his love of God. The correct reference is, however, to Jove, the Roman god Jupiter.

16. *March*—A gross mistake for Mars, the god of War. *Threaten at command*—Threaten or command. Mars could threaten or command by a mere nod of his head.

Station—Posture ; manner of standing.

11. *Harry mercury*—The herald Mercury. Mercury in classical mythology is the divine messenger.

17-18. *Something . . . . . .on a hill*—This is Mrs. Malaprop's memory playing havoc indeed. In Shakespeare there is heaven-kissing, *i.e.*, very high hill. Mrs. Malaprop simply remembers that it is something about kissing and something about a hill. So she puts two and two together to make it "Kissing on a hill".

18. *The similitude*—Similarity between Hamlet's description of his father and the appearance of the handsome Capt. Absolute.

19. *Enraged*—Angry ; in a temper.

Presently—Very soon.

25. *Good breeding*.—Cultured up bringing in a decent family.

26. *Forgot your duty*—Since you have been disobeying me, who is your aunt and guardian.

27. *My resolution*—My firm resolve not to marry anyone except Beverley.

28. *No encouragement*—In paying me his addresses as a suitor.

31. *Mitigate . . . . .beauty*—To end the anger of the beautiful lady (Lydia) who has not so far relaxed her severity and yielded to compassion.

Mitigate—Lessen.

Unrelenting—That does not relax severity.

31-32. *Difficulty . . . . .fellow*—I could bring my son with me with great difficulty. Capt. Absolute was naturally unwilling to come with his father for fear of being found out by Lydia and all others.

34. *Given me the slip*—Deceived me and stayed away.

36. *I am. . . . . . .cause*—I feel ashamed that you have been put to such great trouble due to this obstinate girl, Lydia.

37. *Beseech you*—Request you.

Pay your respects—Show manners and greet your guests.

39. *Reflected on*—Thought over.
Worth—Value is a candidate for her hand, for he is rich and handsome.

40. *My alliance*—Lydia should also have taken into account that by marrying Capt. Absolute she would be related to a person of my high dignity—a baronet.

42. *What the devil shall I do*—Capt. Absolute is absolutely confused as what to do for there is the imminent danger of being discovered and then he can never be too sure of Lydia's reaction. So far Lydia has not even looked at him as she had earlier told Mrs. Malaprop. If Capt. Absolute spoke, Lydia would certainly address him as Beverley and he would be done for.

43. *Whilst you are here*—Capt. Absolute naturally wants to meet Lydia alone.

44. *Entreat you*—Request or beseech you with utter humility. (Stage Direction). *Expostulate*—Sincerely requesting.

46-47. *I wonder . . . . .yet*—I am surprised that my aunt has not yet discovered her mistake of taking my Beverley to

be Capt. Absolute when he last came here. Lydia thinks that the real Capt. Absolute has now arrived and her aunt would soon realize her mistake and give an exclamation of surprise and discomfiture at being over-reached.

48. *Regimentals*—Army uniforms.

48-49. *Something blind*—Being old she has become somewhat short-sighted. Lydia thinks of all the causes except the real one, that she herself might have been deceived.

50. *I won't stir a foot yet*—Sir Anthony refuses to leave the room as requested by his son. I won't budge an inch, says he.

53. *I blush for you*—I am ashamed of you.

54 *May I not flatter myself*—The gentle way of speaking, which Sir Anthony would certainly like to affect.

55. *Will assign. . . . .my son*—Sir Anthony asks Lydia to explain the reasons which make her dislike his son.

56. *Why don't you begin*—Why don't you ask her yourself. Capt. Absolute has his own reasons for not speaking.

59. *Any*—Any reasons for disliking your son.

61-62. *A childish . . . . .happiness*—Lydia's childish and sudden partiality against my son will not mar his happiness if he marries her. He means that he is prepared to marry Lydia to his son even without her consent.

62. *Predilection*—Partiality ; mental preference.

65. *Inclined*—Willing.

65-66. *How strangely . . . . .be*—Since she has not yet discovered that this was the man who prevailed upon her as Capt. Absolute while he was only Beverley.

67. *Hem, hem*—Clearing his throat in nervousness. He has to speak at last.

68. *Faith*—Truly.

69. *Confounded*—Nervous ; confused.

70. *Tremor*—Quivering ; thrill of emotion.

70-71. *The tremor. . . . .of mind*—My emotion has so confused

me that I am not able to decide how and what to do or say.

Stage Direction—Since Sir Anthony has already refused to go out he tries to get at least Mrs. Malaprop away for she knew the secret of their last meeting correctly and did not know he was Beverley.

74. *Sir Anthony etc.*—Capt. Absolutes succeeds with Mrs. Malaprop.

75. *Vixen*—She-fox ; hence a quarrelsome woman.

76. *Not yet, ma'am*—Sir Anthony refuses Mrs. Malaprop's request and forces his son to speak to Lydia in his presence.

77. *Unlock your jaws*—As if he was not speaking due to his jaws being locked together, he is ordered to unlock (open) them and to speak.

78. *Heaven send*—May God so desire.

Sullen—Stubbornly ill-humoured.

To look round—To look at me.

79. *Disguise my voice*—Change my voice a little so that she does not recognize me as Beverley.

Stage Direction. *Hoarse*—Broken rough voice.

80. *Will not . . . . love*—Will you not condescend to hear the tender addresses of a true lover.

82. *What the devil ails the fellow*—He asks this because he can divine no explanation for his son's voice suddenly turning hoarse.

84. *Quinsy*—Inflammation of throat ; tonsilitis.

85-86. *The excess choke me*—I am so nervous and shy at the moment that I am unable to speak.

88. *Directly*—Immediately.

Glibly—Smoothly ; fluently.

89-90. *I wish . . . . side front*—I would request Lydia to sit in a manner that we can look at her face and not a side only. A strange request to make !

S. D. *Chide*—Rebuke ; scold.

92. *Be not surprised . . . . etc.*—Capt. Absolute decides at last to ask Lydia as Beverley, not to feel surprised at seeing him there as Sir Anthony's son. If for the present she sheds all surprise matters can be explained away later on.

95. *Sure he can't . . . . . too*—A very potent argument which Capt. Absolute strangely could not think of.

S. D. *By dergees*—Slowly.

Satrts up—Is astonished.

98. *'Tis all over*—All my secrets will now be known.

100. *This is my son*—Now not a ray of doubt can be there with Lydia.

102. *Head runs so . . . . fellow*—You continue to think every moment of Beverley.

102-3 *That you . . . . eyes*—So much so that you always see him before your eyes, whoever be there.

107-108. *Her brain's . . . . reading*—To Sir Anthony, all evil in women arises from their education.

109. *I belive so*—Mrs. Malaprop seconds what Sir Anthony says about Lydia's head turning by reading.

113. *With all my soul*—I am wholly prepared to accept him as my husband.

113-14. *When I . . . . Beverley*—If I do not accept my own Beverley . . . . . etc. She is not allowed to complete her sentence.

115. *As mad as Bedlam*—She is so mad as to be a fit case for being sent to Bedlam, the hospital for lunatics. Bedlam was the name given to the monastery of St. Mary of *Bethlehem*, which in 1447 was turned into a mental hospital in the city of London. Bedlam now means any lunatic asylum.

115-16. *Or has this . . . . trick*—Sir Anthony at last guesses the truth and asks his son to explain the whole thing

117. *Who the devil are you*—Are you my son Jack Absolute only or also Beverley?

118. *I am. . . .myself*—The roguish language. He might not be clear as how to explain away his mischief but he should at least be clear that he has been both.

119. *Endeavour to recollect*—Try to recall who I am, Absolute or Beverley.

120. *Are you my son or not?*—A point-blank question possible only with Sir Anthony for it is funny indeed for a father to ask his son whether he is his son or not.

Answer for your mother. . . .etc—If you are really somebody else's son Beverley, let me know the truth, for your mother's honour is at stake. (As if *his* honour was not at stake). The situation is typical in a comedy of errors.

122-23. *I begin to suspect*—I feel I can guess the reality behind this affair, that he might have duped me also.

124. *Ye powers of Impudence*—O you gods that render a man shamelessly bold! make me so.

125. *Assuredly*—Certainly.

126-27. *I sincerely. . . .shown*—I have proved by my being always a dutiful son to you, that I always believed myself to be your own son.

128. *Proud to. . . .nephew*—I felt proud to think that I shall soon be your nephew when I marry your niece, Lydia.

130-31. *The singular. . . .temper*—The exceptional kindness of her nature (because she cared to love a poor Ensign).

131. *A station*—That of a poor ensign.

131-32. *Which has. . . .love*—Because I assumed such a humble station as that of a sub lieutenant I can claim that I loved you unselfishly without caring to get your riches.

133. *In a more. . . .character*—Your love which I then enjoyed as a poor ensign, may now be kindly allowed to be enjoyed by me as a Captain in the army and a rich heir to a baronet.

134. *So! there. . .after all*—This is the incurably sentimental

and absurdly romantic disposition. She has, it seems, not been seeking love but the thrill of an elopement, which, she feels, might not be possible now.

135-37. Strangely, Sir Anthony does not get angry with his son for planning such a romantic deception. This perhaps may be explained by pointing out his own extremely romantic ideas expressed by him from time to time. So if his son has followed suit, he only gets happy with him.

134. *Upon my soul*—I say so truly.

136. *To do you justice*—It is not just to call you only impudent, full justice would be done to you only when you are described as the *most impudent* fellow upon the earth. The remark has been made with gladness and pride at his son's doing.

136-37. *I think. . . .assurance*—I think I never saw a better trick being more successfully completed by a cleverer fellow.

138. *You compliment*—You are rather praising me by saying so, instead of rebuking me.

139. *It is. . . .in my way*—"You see that I could not speak before because I had assumed the character of a humble sub-lieutenant."

141. *Dull insensible*—Unromantic and lacking in strong feelings.

142. *Varlet*—Rascal.

You pretended to be—As Capt. Absolute had really pretended when he stood penitent before his father on learning that Lydia was the very girl his father wanted him to marry.

143. *I'm glad you. . . .father*—The anger at being over-reached has been overpowered by the pride at his son's ingenuity.

144. *So this was. . . .obedience*—Now I see that since you were already in love with the same girl I wanted you to marry you came to me as a penitent son, ready to obey me in everything and repenting on your past misconduct.

145. *I thought....sudden*—I did think at that time that your conversion was a little to sudden to be genuine. (But perhaps, since it was in his favour, Sir Anthony gave credence to it.)

145-46. *You never heard....you*—Didn't you pretend that you did not even know the names of Miss Languish and Mrs. Malaprop. What a rank lie you gave me, sir !

147-48. *If you....desired*—You also hypocritically pretended that you had no choice of your own to make but were accepting my proposal simply to please me by obeying me.

148. *Dissembling villain*—Pretending rogue.

149. *What she squints*—This is what Capt. Absolute had recalled about Lydia when he tried to think whether he knew the family of the Languishes of Worsestershire, or not.

149-50. *A little red-haired girl*—This was also said about Lydia by Capt. Absolute.

151-15. *I wonder....your head*—I am surprised to see that you are still holding your head high and not hanging it in shame at the shameful conduct you have been guilty of.

153. *'Tis with difficulty*—I am able to hold my head up with great difficulty, for I am really ashamed and confused at all this.

155. *Oh, Lud* !—Oh, Lord !

155-56. *A new light. . upon me*—I see the whole case in the correct perspective now. Perhaps she suddenly recalls Beverley's letter intercepted by her as she now accuses Capt. Absolute of insulting her in his letter.

158. *Elegant compilation* Graceful composition. A nice letter with beautiful phrases. She says it bitterly and sarcastically.

158-59. *"Old weather-beaten".....etc.*—This is what Beverley had called her in his letter.

163. *Reflected on*—Criticised.

161-62. *My modesty assist me*—I may not be able to restrain myself from retorting and thus giving up my modesty if you do not help me in my embarrassment and check the accusations against me. Capt. Absolute is in a very confused state of mind and also really guilty of insulting Mrs. Malaprop ; so he would rather no reply to her.

163. *Stand it*—Tolerate it.

164. *Come, come*—Sir Anthony at once comes to the rescue of his son and asks Mrs. Malaprop to forgive him.

165-66. *So clever a turn*—Such an interesting change has come in the case.

166-67. *That I could....humoured*—I find myself in a gay forgiving mood and enjoying, rather than be irritated at, the new situation.

167. *So gallant*—My son's action has been so much like romantic lovers that I feel happy over it.

172. *Long*—Intensely desire.

172-73. *I warrant*—I am sure.

173-74—*Isn't the check....lip*—Is she not as beautiful as I described to you ? It is strange that the old man should feel so enthusiastic about Lydia's beauty that he should forget all decorum.

175. *Disturb....tenderness* Interfere in their love-making.

175-76. *There's......happiness*—They are in youth which is the spring of life, to be enjoyed to the utmost.

177-78. *I'm in such spirits*—I am so happy. So Sir Anthony really is for he starts singing a gay song from Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* :—

"*Youth's the season made for joys Love is then our duty.*"

178. *Permit me*—Allow me to shake hands with you. A polite way of inviting to dance together.

180. *Tol-de-rol*—A refrain of song in Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer."

Gad—By God.

A little fooling—Singing or dancing like a fool even when there is no occasion for it.

(S. D.) *Handing*—Holding Mrs. Malaprop with his hand to assist her out of the room.

182. *So much . . . . good*—such seriousness (on the part of my mistress) does not seem encouraging for me.

184. *Sir*—"A rebuke for calling her by her Christian name—Lydia." (Herring)

185. *So, Egad*—So she is really gravel angry, by God !

I expected as much—I knew this would come.

186. *Monosyllable*—A word of one syllable, '*Sir*' spoken by Lydia just now.

Froze me—Frozen my spirits. All my courage is gone.

187-88. *We are . . . come*—We are now doubly happy since not only our vows to be of each other's have been realised but also we have got the consent of our guardian for uniting.

189. *Friend consent indeed*—Indeed we *have* got our friends consent (but I did not want). Lydia wanted to enjoy the thrill of marrying against her guardian's will.

(S. D.) *Peevishly*—Irritably.

190-92. *We must . . . . after all*—Let us now give up some of our foolish romantic ideas and think of enjoying wealth and comfort as things that would certainly add to our happiness.

193. *Settlements*—The lawyers shall in the proper manner, settle your property on you after your marriage. He means that they should now be realists and be prepared to get their wealth from Mrs. Malaprop. Lydia however reacts sharply to the idea.

195-96. *Lingering formes*—The slow formalities of legal processes.

196. *Instantly procure licence*—Immediately get our marriage licence, *i.e.*, be legally married. To Lydia, the only charm was a secret marriage. She, therefore, refuses again.

108. *Oh, my love* !—When simple requests to face facts fail, Capt. Absolute employs lovers flattering language to please her.

200. *Pshaw*—Signifying hate.

200-201. *What signifies . . . . you*—What is the meaning in kneeling down and entreating me when you know that I am to be compelled to marry you ?

202-3. *There shall . . . . . . inclination*—I shall not like to see you forced to act against your wishes.

204. *I resign the rest*—I withdraw my claim to marry you.

204-205. *I must try . . . . will do*—Requests having failed he decides upon trying a little show of temper.

207. *The inerest . . . . there*—The love which I had for you. *Mean*—Low.

207-8. *Unmanly imposition*—Fraud unworthy of a man.

208. *Fraud*—Deception, that of assuming the name of Beverley and keeping her in ignorance of the reality.

209. *Treating . . . child*—Behaving with me as light-heartedly or non-seriously as if I were a child.

210. *Humouring my romance*—Just satisfying my whim for romance.

212. *You wrong me*—That is not the correct explanation which you are giving.

214. *Fondly*—Foolishly.

215-16. *Flattered . . . . . them all*—felt pleased to think that I could over-reach and irritate all my relations by our elopement.

216. *My hopes are to be crushed*—All my romantic fancies end unrealized.

217. *Approbation*—Approval, (which Lydia never wanted, in order to satisfy her romantic whim).

218. *The only dupe*—The only person who was utterly befooled and cheated.

In a heat—In anger.

220. *Miniature*—Very small picture worn in the pendants of lockets etc.

221. *Threats and entreaties*—Of my aunt.

222. *Flings*—Throws away.

222-23. *Be assured......easily*--Take it clearly from me that you have been equally easily and certainly thrown away from my heart *i.e.*, I don't love you any more.

224. *We will......that*—We will not object to your rejection of me and my portrait.

225. *Taking out a picture*—Of Lydia. It was almost essential for lovers to keep each other's portraits.

226. *What a difference*- What a great difference is there between your attitude to my portrait and mine to yours.

226-27. *Heavenly......smile*—Angelic smile of approval.

227. *Gave......spirit*—Enlivened.

228. *Sealed a vow*—Reiterated a vow of faithfulness in love.

228-29. *As yet......calender*—The vow was written in cupid's calendar The ink of that writing has not yet dried up, *i.e.*, the vow was recently made.

229. *Cupid*—The god of love.

229-30. *The half......thanks*—The charming blush in her face, that may be interpreted as meant for checking me from thanking her for her ardent love. Since love is mutual, the formality of 'thanks' seems out of place there.

232. *That copy*—This portrait of yours.

232-34. *In my mind......part with it*—Although Lydia in person is more beautiful than her portrait with Capt. Absolute, there is one circumstance in which the portrait is preferable to her ; in its constancy. Lydia has changed her attitude to him but not the portrait. Hence he would not part with the faithful portrait as Lydia has done.

Capt. Absolute is cleverly trying to touch her on the sensitive spot, that of faithfulness in love at any cost.

235-36. *'Tis your . . . . satisfied*—Since you yourself are responsible for what I had to do, you should be fully satisfied with my behaviour.

237-38. *This is . . . . in love*—"It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

238. *There's . . . . in this*—There is some thrill at least in this dismissal of love. Capt. Absolute has been trying all sorts of methods to affect Eydia. Now he uses irony and sarcasm in remarking that since Lydia has been very fond of thrills in her love affair she has got at least one in rejecting a faithful lover.

239-40. *What. . . . . .promises*—It does not matter at all that you have to break scores of promises of faithfulness in order to enjoy this thrill. This is hitting hard indeed !

240. *Of no consequence*--Of no importance.

241-42. *Miss didn't . . . . mind*—Perhaps Lydia being young did not herself clearly understand what she was promising to him.

243-44. *Be ill . . . . forsook her*—Some malicious people may even go so far as to suggest that Capt. Absolute got fed up with Lydia and left her alone for someone else.

245. *Fret*—Disturb.

246. *There's . . . . insolence*—It is impossible to tolerate the impudence of this fellow who goes on attacking her so mercilessly. Lydia is now getting the shock of her life for no one has ever stripped her off the sentimental nonsense she has so passionately prized.
Bursts into tears—The last resort of a woman.

248. *Billing and cooing*—Making love.

249. *This is . . . . deceit*—This kind of talk is worse than your cheating me with a false name.

250. *Ingrate*—Ungrateful person.

252. *Oddest*—Most strange. Since there are tears and temper visible in Lydia.

259. *Frenzy*—Violent anger.

260. *You are . . . . you*—You have not disclosed yourself as somebody else again, I suppose.

262. *Cereberus*—The three-headed dog of Pluto at the gate of Hades (Hell). Mrs. Malaprop means that just as that dog had three heads, Capt. Absolute might prove to have three personalities two of which (Beverley and Capt. Absolute) have already been known and the third might have just been disclosed to Lydia which has caused her to weep.

265. *Account for this*—Explain it.

268. *Renounces*—Forsakes.

269. *Miracles*—A wonder, that Lydia should suddenly become so obedient.

270-71—*You haven't . . . . niece*—I hope you have not given any offence to my niece by trying to make love too boldly.

273. *Now I see it*—He takes Mrs. Malaprop's suggestion to be true.

274. *Lively*—Bold in making love.

276. *No lying*—Confess truly if this was the case.

277. *Oh, Lud*—Oh Lord . . . . etc. Mr. Malaprop is too astonished to find this might have been true.

279. *No excuses*—There is no need to be sorry for it, for I myself in my young age was so. Sir Anthony has at least been too indulgent for the follies of love, unless of course they went against his authority.

280-81. *The blood . . . . impatient*—The Absolutes were always reputed to be impetuous in love-making. Sir Anthony has certainly lived up to that reputation by his own confession.

286. *'Tis Jack's way*—It is my son's peculiar way of making love to and not offending her.

289. *A young villain*—Capt. Absolute must has been so called by Sir Anthony with a glimmer of affection and pride in his eyes.

290. *Oh! Sir Anthony!*—Mrs. Malaprop stands scandalized, though.

ACT IV. Scene III

Line 1. *I wonder . . . . himself*—Sir Lucius is searching for Capt. Absolute to challenge him in a duel for being his rival in loving Lydia.

2-3. *These officers . . . . affairs*—Young military officers in their smart uniforms are a great attraction for the young ladies to fall in love with. Since the ladies are more susceptible to their charms than to those of civilians, the civilians feel offended as does Sir Lucius here with Capt. Absolute.

4-5. *If it had . . . . major*—If that wicked military officer (a major in this case) had not come in between us I would have succeeded in marrying Lady Carmine.

5-6. *Who ran . . . . of me*—What a ridiculously inconsistent argument from Sir Lucius. He is confident he would have married the lady although he had never seen her. The major is accused because he had been meeting her and eloped with her *even before Sir Lucius met her.*

6-7. *And I . . . . of them*—What is there in the army officers which makes them more attractive to young ladies ?

8. *A touch of the old Serpent*—The old serpent is the reference to Satan, who in the guise of a serpent tempted Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and thus to commit sin. Army officers have a touch of Satan in them for they tempt young women to commit sin.

8-9. *The little creatures*—The women.

9. *Caught . . . . cloth*—As vipers are attracted by red cloth and are caught, so these young girls are attracted by the red uniform of the military men and are caught in their web.

"Vipers are said to attack a piece of red cloth with such a fury that they expend all their venom on it, and can then be handled without danger." (Balston).

10-11. *There is . . . . fellow*—From the general appearance of this fellow (Capt. Absolute) it appears that he will get success in love.

11-12. *That is mighty provoking*—This appearance of success in him seems to be very annoying to me.

12. *Who the . . . . to ?*—To whom is he talking ? The question has been so put because Capt. Absolute was alone, muttering something to himself.

13. *To what . . . . plotting*—Ironically spoken. With what failure did I plan my ticks with Lydia ? As indicated in the earlier scene, he has succeeded only in irritating Lydia.

14. *Noble reward . . . . schemes*—What a nice reward have I got for all my plottings in the name of Beverley ! The reward has been Lydia's anger only.

15. *A little gipsy*—A remark for Lydia. It is lovingly spoken and means a mischievous woman.

16. *So damned absurd*—So very foolish and unreasonable as to reject me unfeeling and forget all her love for me to retain her whims.

'S death—God's death. An oath referring to the crucifixion of Christ.

17. *Worse humour*—So bad mood.

17-19. *I could . . . . world*—This is the worst temper he is in, so that he can kill himself or anyone else without hesitation. The remark is suitable in the context that is to come for soon Sir Lucius is to challenge him in a duel and he would gladly agree.

20. *I'm in the luck of it*—I am fortunate to find Capt. Absolute in such a bad temper, so that he would at once agree to fight me and be killed or at least defeated.

21. *Sweeter temper for my purpose*—Better temper to become

a victim of my proposal of duel. Sir Lucius indulges in some wishful thinking.

22. *Come in the nick*—Arrived at the most opportune time to get him in a bad temper.

23. *Quarrel genteely*—Quarrel with him in a polite way; arguing in a mannerly way. Sir Lucius would do himself too, what he has been preaching Bob Acres "these things should always be done civilly."

24. *The matter*—Sir Lucius uses the pronoun 'that' without referring to what it stands for. He might have had the matter of Lydia in his mind but he doesn't say so. He only wants a trifle to begin the quarrel and he thinks difference of opinion will do. Capt Absolute is also in a bad temper and so readily gets into the quarrel without asking what it is about.

26-27. *Subtle disputant*—Clever fellow to begin a dispute.

27-28. *Because, Sir . . . . at all*—This is the cleverness of Sir Lucius which Capt. Absolute hints at. He says: I have not expressed any opinion on anything, yet you say you differ from me. This is clever arguing indeed!

29 *Tha's no reason*—Yours is not a sound argument.

30. *A man . . . . one*—A man may have a false opinion in his mind even when he does not express it; so you may be thinking of an untruth, which I differ with.

33. *Escaping controversy*—Should not be argued about. A thought unless expressed and known can harldly be disputed.

34-35. *Then Sir . . . . same thing*—Sir Lucius is clever in arguing. As soon as Capt. Absolute says that a thought, unless expressed, cannot be disputed, Sir Lucius says that this is the opinion he differs from. So the quarrel might well arise from this difference of opinion. Sheridan, thus, wants to hint how duels were fought at that time for trifles or for no reason at all.

36-38. *If I had . . . . interview*—If I had not known earlier that you were a gentleman I should have concluded from to-day's talk of yours, that you were not.

38-40. *What you . . . . . conceive*—What is your purpose in arguing with me in such an absurd manner? I cannot think of any other aim of yours than to quarrel with me.

42. *Conceive*—Imagine.

41-42. *Quickness . . . . apprehension*—For understanding my point and purpose so quickly. I certainly want to quarrel with you.

44-45. *Balk your inclination*—Thwart or disappoint you in your desire to fight. (I agree to fight you as you desire.)

46. *Explain your motives*—Let me know the reason why you want to fight.

47. *Be easy*—Please don't get angry. Sir Lucius would like his adversary also to be polite.

47-49. *The quarrel . . . . explain it*—The people getting bored with idleness sought to get thrills in fighting duels and deliberately ran into quarrels. So has Sir Lucius. He thinks that the matter for quarrel is a graceful one and its beauty would be marred by trying to explain and discuss it. So he would rather keep it a pretty secret.

49-50. *Your memory . . . . short*—You seem to possess a weak memory.

50. *Affront* Insult.

50-51. *You passed on the*—You inflicted on me.

51-52. *No more . . . . place*—So please argue no more about matters and causes of duel but let me know directly the time and place at which you would like to fight duel with me. Sir Lucius has given the reason of quarrel without of course telling anything tangible.

53. *Bent on it*—Resolved to fight a duel.

53-55. *Spring Gardens*—The gardens laid out around the Bath suburbs "for people of rank and fashion to walk in". "Which considering their contiguity to so great a city are very delightful and afford, to all conditions of people, a very national amusement". A feature of these gardens were the public breakfasts, at which a band played. Many such accounts are found in *The New Bath Guide* (1766).

55. *We shall. . . . interrupted*—Since the gardens are away from the city, they are not expected to be frequented by many people and so no disturbance would be there in our duel. Since duels were illegal, a lonely place had to be selected for them.

56. *Same interruption*—This matter of interfering in a duel.

56-57. *Affairs of this nature*—In a duel.

57. *Ill-breeding*—Bad manners.

58. *But in England*—Since he is an Irishman he critcizes the people of England who think it good to interfere in a duel.

58-59. *A thing of. . . .wind*—If the news of a duel spreads.

59. *Pother*—Fuss.

60. *Never fight in peace. . . .etc*—Since duelling was illegal, if a news about it spread, people fighting or helping in a duel would be arrested.

61. *Same to you.*—is equally convenient to you as the place proposed by you.

62. *King's Mead-fields*—In the West of Bath. Here it was that Bob Acres was to fight Beverley and Sir Lucius was present himself as Acres' friend.

63. *A little business*—He has Acres' duel in mind.

64. *Despatch. . . .once*—Decide or settle both the duels, Acres' with Beverley and his own with Capt. Absolute, at once.

66. *Discuss . . .Seriosly*—Instead of mere talk indulge in deadly fighting.

68. *Small-sword light*—A light dim enough to permit fighting with small swords only i.e. from quite near.
It won't. . . .shot—The light will not be enough for a shot from a long range.

69. *My mind's at ease*—I feel calm in my mind.

71-72. *All the. . . .against me*—All the evil agencies of hate and disappointment seem to be letting him down.

72. *Vexed*—Confused.

72-75. *If I had not. . . .the cause*—If I were not hoping that

something possibly will come that might end in my head being knocked down, then I might have been too dejected even to tell you the cause of it. He seems to be deriving some consolation from the fact that the duel might bring his death and the end of all miseries. He has almost broken down with disappointment.

74. *Scarce*—Hardly.

77-78. *Spirits*—Energy.

77-78. *I should . . . . some object*—I think that Lydia's duty towards her guardian and her own desire now point out to the same person – since Beverley and Capt. Absolute have turned out to be one and the same gentleman.

79. *Just as . . . . squints*—The duty and desire of Lydia incline towards the same person in the same way as the eyes of a squint-eyed person. That means that they do not incline towards one thing, because the eyes of a squint-eyed person appear to be looking in the different directions.

80. *Love-eye*—With one eye of inclination in love she looks at me as Beverley.

80-81. *Eye of duty*—The other eye is of her duty towards Mrs. Malaprop that should have rejected me as Beverley since her aunt so desired.

81. *Finely obliqued*—Looking the other way : looking not at me as Capt. Absolute.

81-82. *When duty . . . . some way*—When duty-bound to obey Mrs. Malaprop in marrying me as Capt. Absolute or when her duty (Capt. Absolute) pointed to her love-eye (Beverley) also.

82. *Off t' other turned*—Immediately the other eye (love-eye) turned away from me as a wheel on a pivot.

82. *Swivel*—Ring and pivot.

83. *And secured. . . .frown*—Got separated with me in anger. This is really a highly artificial and circumlocutory style; but it was common in that society which believed in artificial manners and snobbery.

43. *Resource*—Opportunity. (The duel with Sir Lucius as Capt. Absolute now explains).

85. *To wind up the whole*—To bring everything to a satisfactory end.

85-86. *A good-natured Irishman*—Very civil polished and cultured Irishman—Sir Lucius. He says so ironically and means exactly the opposite qualities than he mentions.

86. *Mimicking*—Copying ; Imitating.

86-87. *Begged leave . . . . throat*—Begged my permission to kill me in a duel (It is this absurdly polite language of Sir Lucius that he mimicks).

87-88. *I mean to indulge him*—I propose to satisfy his wishes by agreeing to fight a duel with him.

89. *Prithee, be serious*—I pray you, please do not joke on such a serious matter.

90. *'Tis fact upon my soul*—Trust me, I am telling you the very truth.

91. *By sight*—By his face.

Affront—Insult.

92. *Intended*—Meant deliberately to inflict.

93. *On that account*—About that matter.

94. *You must go with me*—Capt. Absolute proposes to make Faulkland his 'second'.

Sheridan is cleverly arranging to bring all the characters to King's Mead-fields to wind up the plot. The resolution of the plot has already started and continues in the fifth act also.

95. *There must . . . . mistake*—Sir Lucius must have been mistaken somewhere in taking offence.

96-97. *Lucius . . . . accommodated*—When Sir Lucius explains the real cause of offence, I am sure, the misunderstanding will be removed and the matter settled without resorting to a duel.

97-98. *I wish it . . . . times*—Faulkland has angered Julia and wants to make up the quarrel as soon as possible.

Absolute thinks that Faulkland is perhaps objecting to the time because of bad light at that time.

99. *There will be light enough*—The light at the time of duel will be enough to permit fighting.

100-101. *"Be very . . . . . long shot"*—He quotes Sir Lucius' words mimicking him.

101-102. *Confound his long shots*—Damn Sir Lucius and his duel. Capt. Absolute is very much annoyed and irritated.

103. *Ruffled*—Disturbed. (Having quarrelled with Julia).

104. *Difference*—Tiff ; lover's quarrel.

104-5. *Vile, tormenting temper*—Evil suspicious nature that led to torture.

105-6. *I shall . . . . reconciled*—I shall not feel easy and composed in my mind till our quarrel has been made up and we are loving friends again.

108. *I dread*—I am afraid.

109. *To take a last leave*—Faulkland's guilty conscience imagines the worst. It may be, says Faulkland, that she has written this letter to break our engagement for good.

109-110. *To bid mee . . . . letters*—To ask me to return to her the love-letters she wrote to me, since they are to be separated for ever. It was obligatory for the lovers to do so when their engagements broke off.

110. *And restore . . . . . .*—give back. He does not complete the sentence but what he means is that she wants to return to him all the presents she got from him during the period of courtship. This was also obligatory at the breaking off, of engagement.

110-11. *How I suffer for my folly*—Faulkland has always realized his folly but has never been able to overcome it.

113-14. *Ay a final . . . . faith*—Capt. Absolute is so disgusted with his friend's folly that he hits at him with taunts to tease him, saying that the letter really brings the news of the final break off.

115. *In suspense*—As to what really are the contents of the letter.

ment that if she dies of the disappointments of her own making, it would be no surprise.

164. *Sad reverse*—Sorrowful opposite situation. Instead of the pleasure of thrills I am getting the sorrow of disappointment.

164. *What I have to expect but*—All that I can now hope to get will be only . . . . .

165. *A deal of flimsy preparation*—A lot of ordinary routine preparations about the ceremony of marriage.

165-66. *Bishop's licence*—The procedure of an English marriage was :—that a notice of the intended marriage had to be given beforehand. It was technically known as 'banns'. The bishop would ask at the time of ceremony, if any of the people present had any objection to their marriage. If objection did not come the lovers were united, otherwise if anyone objected, the ceremony could be stopped till the validity of objection was ascertained. A bishop's licence, however, was a valid certificate of marriage given by the bishop overiding the above procedure. Rich people thought it more dignified to be married thus.

166. *My aunt's blessing*—Lydia wanted to rebel against Mrs. Malaprop and marry against her wishes ; so even the blessings of her are resented by her.

To go simpering up to the altar—To proceed slowly towards the altar of the church (the place for marriage) while smiling affectedly all the time.

167. *Be cried . . . . church*—As explained above (lines 165-66 —Bishop's licence) the ordinary course of marriage may be adopted in which the 'banns' of marriage were published on three successive Sundays before the marriage could be solemnised. The priest, after the service in the church used to announce. 'I publish the banns of marriage between . . . . . such and such—etc.'' Lydia means that just possible they might not be married by a bishop's licence but their names may have to be announced on three successive Sundays in public. This seems utterly disgusting to her.

168. *An unmannerly fat clerk*—Some rough fat clergyman in

a country church. The remark shows the pitch of her resentment.

168-69. *Ask the consent . . . . . parish*—Since the priest asks the people present if they have any objection to the marriage, he would do so in Lydia's case also. What better people could be expected to be present in the country-church than butchers? Wouldn't it be disgraceful to be married with such people's consent?

170. *Spinster*—An elderly, unmarried woman. It originally meant one who spins. "It was a regular received axiom with our frugal forefathers that no young woman was fit to be a wife till she *spun* for herself a set of body, table and bed-liner. Hence the maiden was turned a Spinner or spinster." (Brewer). Lydia feels abhorred at the thought that she should be addressed as a common village woman by ordinary priest.

172. *Melancholy, indeed!*—It would be an unhappy sight indeed!

173. *Mortifying*—Insulting, humiliating.

173-74. *The deer delicious shifts*—The happy expedients or devices.

174. *I used to be put to*—I used to use or adopt.

175. *This fellow*—Capt. Absolute.

175-76. *Stole forth*—Went out stealthily.

177. *Stuck like . . . . . . statue*—Due to freezing cold become stiff like a statue and dripping with the falling snow.

178. *Sneeze and cough*—Due to cold.

179. *Pathetically*—So as to arouse pity in me. A romantic fabrication of an idea.
I with apprehension—All through the short interview I used to tremble with fear of being detected by my aunt.

180. *Blast*—Fierce winds.
Numbed—Benumbed; made insensible.

181. *Warmly*—With the warmth of loving phrases and emotion.

Press me—Entreat ; request.

Flame—Fire of love burning in his heart.

182. *Grow with mutual ardour*—Be warm with the passionate love for each other. While the bodies were cold, their hearts were warm all the time.

182-83. *Something. . . .involve*—That was the real experience of love, the rest is only a formality.

184. *In spirits*—In a normal state.

Chide—Admonish ; scold.

185. *Laughing heartily at you*—Laughing at your foolishness.

185-86. *It suits. . . . . .mind*—My mind is better suited at this time.

186. *Earnestly*—Sincerely.

187—89. *Note to let. . . .inflict*—Do not let your lover Capt. Absolute suffer due to your foolish whims of elopement and secret marriage. She knows (from her experience with Faulkland's caprice just before) what great pain and evil consequences follow when an innocent person is subjected to the uncertain temper of another. Faulkland's whim led Julia to reject him, now Lydia's caprice might cost her a valuable match.

191. *So ! so work !*—Really there has been happening something fine with us here ! Mrs. Malaprop is greatly agitated.

192. *Suicide*—Killing oneself. Since the duellist risk their life in it they might be taken as prepared for suicide.

Going on in the fields—She is referring to the duels that are going to be fought in the King's Mead-fields.

199. *Do, sir. . . .etc.*—She has grown impatient.

200—4. Fag tries to give the impression of his politeness and good breeding before the ladies. In the attempt he forgets the more urgent task of giving the information of the disaster to come. The ladies naturally find him intolerable.

200. *Very deficient*—Utterly lacking.

201. *Requisite*—The required quality.

The man of breeding—The well-bred man.

201—3. *If I. . .you are*—If I delay a moment the information required by you I would show myself a man of ill-breeding. The fun is that by his chatter and long-mindedness he really delays the information.

207. *Matter of this nature*—Matters that are serious enough lead to a catastrophe· In this case, a duel is meant.

Tedious—Tiresome and long-minded.

208. *Flourishing on the subject*—While we are giving the d-tails of the subject in a bombastic and elaborate langu·ge, he is really flourishing on the subject of "flourishing is bad."

209. *Oh, patience*—As Lydia hears the words "two or three lives may be lost", she gets impatient and begs for the information to Mrs. Malaprop.

211—13. With the talk of murder and slaughter and without giving any precise information on the subject Mrs. Malaprop further frightens the young girls. She means that the matter is such that it might result in murder or killing.

211. *Slaughter*—Slaying or killing in a ruthless manner of many persons or animals.

214. *Prithee*—I pray thee.

215-16. *I cannot. . . .say*—I do not take the responsibility to say so.

216. *Slaughter or manslaughter*—Whether it would be really slaughter (the killing of many persons or massacre) or manslaughter (the killing of a man without predetermination), will have to be decided by the jury in the court afterwards. Fag now indulges in the luxury of talking in the legal language while the ladies grow most impatient.

218. *Who are engaged in this*—Who is going to commit slaughter or murder ?

219. *Faith*—Truly.

221. *Pretty-behaved*—Well-behaved ; cultured.

222. *On terms*—On good terms. As friends.

223. *Who ! who ! who*—The height of impatience.

233. *Mischief*—Harm.

Folks don't use to meet—People do not meet.

234. *Firearms, firelocks .....etc.*—David is a rustic primarily, in his mind and breeding. He has heard a word or two in connection with duel, like firearms etc. Since he has got to impress everyone present, he uses all the words he knows beginning with the word fire and when he has exhausted his personal knowledge on fire-compounds he generalises by saying that besides the above ones he means all the other explosives also which he has not enumerated. What he means is that since these people have met with firearms etc., there is the most serious danger of someone being killed.

Firearms—Guns and pistols.

Fire-engines—That put out the fire.

Fire-locks—Guns in which the powder was exploded with a pin. An antique weapon.

Fire-screen—A screen to save oneself from the heat of fire.
Fire-office—An office for insurance against fire.

235. *Crackers*—Explosives.

236. *Angry favour*—Evil appearance.

237. *But who is there*—Julia suspects Faulkland also might be there for he is a friend of Capt. Absolute.

239. *My poor master*—Bob Acres.
Under favour—Please permit me to.

241. *Is or was*—He might be living or might have been killed by now.

243. *Instantly endeavour*—At once make efforts.

244. *Prevent mischief*—To stop them harm. To check them from fighting.

245. *Inelegant in us*—Indelicate or improper for the ladies.

248. *Desperately given*—Given themselves up to the duel recklessly.

249. *Philistine*—A person of an alien warlike people in South Palestine who harassed the Israelites or the Jews. David here uses the word in this sense, meaning fond of war; Philistine later came to mean an enemy in whose hands one may fall, *e.g.* bailiff or critic. It now means an uncultured person or a person of commonplace interests.

251. *Scrape*—Awkward predicament. Since Mrs. Malaprop had an infatuation for Sir Lucius, she at once gets concerned for his safety.

252. *How you stand*—Why don't you hurry to the place?

253. *Conduct*—Guide.

263. *Not a step......world*—Ladies first. Fag throughout tries to ape polite manners.

266. *Report*—Sound of the shots.

267. *Never fear*—After frightening the ladies even as they start, he asks them not to be afraid.

ACT V. SCENE II

(Stage Direction) *Great coat*—A long coat reaching up to the knees. Capt. Absolute is hiding his sword under the coat for fear of being caught, since it was illegal to fight a duel.

Line 1-2. *A sword . . . . mad dog*—If it was known that a duel was going to be fought it would start a commotion in the city. As earlier told, duel being illegal, as soon as an information of this kind was received, Beau Nash, the King of Bath, got the parties arrested.

2-3. *How provoking . . . . Faulkland*—How irritating it is that Faulkland should be late at such a critical hour.

S.D. *Muffles up . . . . off*—Covers up his face so as not to be recognised and then saunters round to avoid meeting Sir Anthony.

6. *How one may . . . . distant*—Sir Anthony at first (rightly) thinks it was his son, then as he feigned no sense of recognition, he feels he was deceived.

7. *Only that . . . . me*—I think that he does not recognise me at all.

11. *Really, Sir . . . . me*—You seem to know me but I do not know you. He pretends not to recognise his father.

12. *Ever to have had the honour*—Of knowing you. We have never met before.

13. *At your service*—The language of courtesy, and politeness. I am at your command.

14. *I took you*—Once again Sir Anthony is on the verge of disbelieving his own eyes.

15. *Why zounds*—The next moment Sir Anthony recognises him fully well.

17. *Scoundrel*—Villain ; unscrupulous person.

What tricks . . . . now—What new mischief are you designing to make now ?

18-19. *A joke, Sir . . . . etc.*—Capt. Absolute tries to save telling the truth by giving convincing excuses.

20. *So lucky*—As to find me here.

21. *Muffled up so*—Why have you covered your face so thoroughly—if you have come to meet your father you need not have done this.

23. *'Tis cool, Sir*—I have covered myself against the cold.

24. *I have . . . engagement*—Just now he has said that he came there on purpose to see his father now, he says he has some special engagement and he, must go. Thus he is caught unawares.

30. *You unmannerly puppy*—He is called an unmannerly dog because he seems to be mimicking his father by repeating his words.

31-33. Capt. Absolute again tries to connect the two things somehow with an excuse, that of coming to see his father and then going somewhere.

32. *To make matters up*—To patch up my quarrel with her and be friends again.

36. *Not for the world*—Not at all, was I looking for you with that purpose.

37. *To, to, to*—He stammers in confusion. Every time he gives an excuse, a new trouble arises.

38. *You'd better not stay out*—Because Sir Anthony being a patient of gout might get an attack of it due to cold.

41. *Humour her*—Tickle her vanity ; please her with promises and vows.

42-43. *Consider . . . . gout*—He wants to get rid of Sir Anthony as soon as he can.

45. *Youngsters*—Young people.

46. *Wounded here*—Wounded in your heart ; to fall in love.

47. *What the deuce . . . . here*—As Sir Anthony touches his son

at his breast he feels the hard hilt of the sword below his longcoat. Hence the question.

49-50. *Damned hard*—Very hard.

51. *Trink-ts*—Little ornaments, meant as a present for his ladylove.

A bangle for Lydia—Being small ornaments they are mere plaything (toys) for Lydia.

52. *Let me see your taste*—Let me see what sort of ornaments have you brought for your love.

53-54. *You are . . . . throat*—Now Sir Anthony absolutely corners his son. He sarcastically remarks that if the sword is a trinket, is it to cut Lydia's throat with?

55. *I thought . . . . you*—I did it on purpose to amuse you. Capt. Absolute again tries to save the situation somehow.

57-58. *This is . . . . truly*—Yes, a sword is certainly a very amusing sort of ornament. Sarcastically said.

60. *Dev'lish romantic*—Excessively romantic.

62. *Unsheath*—Draw out from the sheath.

62-63. *I'll fall . . . . feet*—I will swear before Lydia (to bring her round, of course), that I would die at her feet with the point of the sword pierced in my heart if she did not excuse me.

63. *Expire*—Die.

64. *Fall upon . . . . end*—Do the most foolish thing.

Fiddle-stick means nonsense.

64-65. *Why I suppose . . . . her*—This excuse of Capt. Absolute has perhaps appealed to his father and he is duped. He remarks that his son's scheme is foolish but agree that it might do with Lydia who is a capricious girl.

65-66. *Get along*—Go ahead with your plan.

67-68. *You shall hear*—Thus will I say.

68. *Or this pointed steel*—If you don't forgive me I shall state myself with the point of this sword.

70. *"Booby . . . . welcome"*—According to Sir Anthony Lydia

might welcome the suicidal move of the Captain and say: Very good, you fool, you are perfectly welcome to stab yourself.

71. *Says she*—She would say. A colloqiual use as in line 69—"Says I."

72. *Stop him . . . . etc.*—David is running with excitement with the ideas of death in a duel rushing into his brain. So he shouts "Murder" . . . . etc.

74. *Bid'm stop*—Bid (ask) them (the duellists) to stop (desist from fighting).

76-77. *He's . . . . breath*—Capt. Absolute seems to have gone out of sight and I am too out of breath to catch him up.

79. *Zounds? he fellow's mad . . . . etc.*—David has been so excited that he has not clearly been able to explain the situation to Sir Anthony. He uses the pronouns in "Bid them stop" or "stop him" etc., without having at first told whom he means. Hence Sir Anthony's remark "Is this fellow mad?"

81-82. *There's murder and slaughter*—Again David does not speak out the precise thing.

84. *Please you*—If you please.

84-85. *There's all . . . . fields*—There can be many kinds of fighting and killing. David does not even now mention the word 'duel' and Sir Anthony is still in the dark.

88. *Dunce*—Fool.

92. *Ah, the dog! . . . . thinks*—Now Sir Anthony understands why his son had the sword hidden under coat and how he had successfully deceived him with excuses.

96. *Not an inch*—I do not know the way to King's Mead-fields, in the least.

Mayor—The head of the town corporation.

Aldermen - City magistrates lower in authority to Mayor.

97. *Church-wardens*—The representatives of a locality with their own church.

Beadles—A parish officer appointed by vestry to keep order in church.

97—99. *We can't . . . . them*—We will not even then be too many to separate the fighters. He wants to go there with many people to avoid every risk.

99. *Give me your shoulder*—He wants David's support because he is a gouty old man.

100. *Get assistance as we go*—As we move on our way, we will collect people to help us in parting the duellists.

The lying villain—Remarked for his son who lied to him about the sword and its purpose.

101-2. *This was . . . . trinkets*—This was the real purpose of his sword and how he gave me the story of trinkets to over-reach me.

102. *Bauble him*—Make a toy of him.

ACT V. SCENE III

Line 1. *By my valour*—He is trying to sustain his courage by swearing in its name. It indicates that as the time for the duel is approaching, he is getting less and less confident of his valour.

1-2. *Forty yards . . . distance*—The measure of the distance to be kept between the two duellists. Acres tries to keep himself at a long distance ; farther, the safer.

2. *Odds levels and aims*—While fighting one has to take a level aim at the adversary. Acres, as usual, swears by an oath relevant to the occasion.

4. *Muskets*—Infantry soldier's hand-gun of an obsolete type. *Field pieces*—Light cannons used in a small field battle.

4—6. Sir Lucius asks whether the distance of forty yards suggested by Acres is to be for a gun or a pistol, because in the latter case it might not be enough. He asks his friend to leave the responsibility of all this upon him. He shows himself an experienced hand in this connection and at once starts measuring the distance with long footsteps.

7—8. *A pretty . . . . distance*—This much distance between adversaries fighting the duel is quite a respectable one. Sir Lucius has measured lesser distance than Acres wanted. So Acres gets frightened and retorts ironically.

9. *We might . . . . sentry box*—Acres remarks that the distance measured by Sir Lucius is so small that it almost amounts to standing in a little cabin for watchman and shooting from close range. Since Acres is frightened of being too near he gives an excuse by saying that farther the distance, the better will be the aim of shot at the enemy. At a greater distance he would take his aim with a cooler mind.

12-13. *Then I suppose . . . . sight*—Sir Lucius cannot help being sarcastic at Acres logic. Farther the better ; so out of sight (farthest), the best.

16-17. *There or . . . . mile*—Note the difference between the approach of the two. While Sir Lucius thinks a distance of three to four feet more than enough, Acres can do with no less than forty yards *i.e.* 120 feet.

18. *Odds . . . valour*—Acres is shocked to hear that he might have to fight his enemy from so near as 3 or 4 feet. Hence in further nervousness he piles oaths upon oaths.

18-19. *There is no . . . . never*—It is not that Acres is afraid to fight from a distance of 3 to 4 feet but he wouldn't like to kill his enemy from so near. Great benevolence indeed !

20. *Bring him down*—Once the enemy is shot he will be brought down.

At a long shot—By a shot from a long distance.

22. *The gentleman's friend*—The second of your enemy in the duel 'Beverley'.

23-24. *In case of an accident*—In case you are accidentally killed.

24-25. *Will or commission . . . . you*—Anything that you may wish me to do, I would perform.

28-29. *There's no being . . . . risk*—In case you are shot at, there is always the danger of being killed as a result.

29. *Unlucky bullet*—(Transferred epithet) A bullet that proves unlucky for you in being fatal.

30. *Should carry a quietus with it*—Should bring death with it ; prove fatal.

30-31. *It will be . . . . matters*—It would not be the suitable time to trouble you with the worry of arranging for your family. Sir Lucius means that if Acres wants to make any arrangements for the family, he should do so before the duel for after it he might not get such an opportunity at all.

32. *A quietus !*—The thought that it is likely, that he might be killed, is brought home to Acres fully well only now.

33. *If that should be the case*—If you are killed.

34. *Would you choose to be pickled*—Would you like to get your body embalmed for preservation and being sent to your home ?

35. *To lie her in the Abbey*—To be buried in the Abbey churchyard at Bath.

36. *Snug*—Comfortable. The statement is ironical for the New Prose Bath Guide gives exactly the opposite condition of the Bath church and its surroundings. The place was full of foul smells and caused many diseases. "The vast Number of bodies buried within the church, and *near the surface*, and the Frequency of the Ground being opened, before the Effect of Putrefaction is over, the Doors and Windows not being sufficiently or constantly kept open, renders the confined Air perceptibly disagreeable on first entering the church . . . . etc."

37-38. *Odds tremors*—He swears by trembling ; he is really very very afraid and starts trembling with fear at the suggestions of death, burial and embalming.

40. *Affair of this kind*—A duel.

42. *That's a pity*—So very unfortunate it is not to have had such an experience.

43. *Being used to a thing*—Being experienced in a thing and knowing its details thoroughly.

43-44. *How would . . . . shot ?*—How would you get ready or station yourself to receive (correctly speaking to avoid) the shot of your enemy.

45. *Odds files*—He swears by a file—a line of soldiers standing behind each other.

45-46. *There, Sir Luicus, there*—He stations himself in a certain position demonstrating to Sir Lucius how he would defend himself.

46. *A side front*—Not facing the enemy but keeping only his side towards him.

47. *Small enough*—Make myself thin enough in the side pose.

48. *Edgeways*—Sideways.

49. *You are quite out*—You are quite outside the right and the safest position. Bob Acres is totally ignorant of the art of fighting.

50. (*Levelling at him*)—Aiming his pistol at Bob Acres.

51-52. *Are you sure . . . . cocked*—Acres is afraid that Sir Luicus pistol might accidentally go off and kill him, so he asks if the trigger is raised, ready to go off.

53. *Never fear*—Do not be afraid for it is not cocked and I shall not fire.

54-55. *It may go off . . . .* head—The shot might go off itself. The pistol might automatically get fired.

56. *Be easy*—Be not nervous.

56-59. Since Sir Luicus has learnt that Acres had had no experience of duelling, he explains to him how to fight. This, however, makes Acres nervous all the more.

59. *My bullet has a double-chance*—My shot has a two-fold chance of killing you. Acres thought it clever to stand sideways for safety but Sir Lucius thinks that in that position the chances of the shot killing Acres would be greater, for the bullet might pierce him right or left, it will pass through the heart and prove fatal. If he stands facing his enemy there is the chance that the bullet might strike the right side and then death would not be so certain.

58. *A vital part*—An indispensable part of the body.

61. *Fix yourself so*—Keep yourself in this position.

62. *The broad-side . . . front*—The whole of your broad chest from the front.

63-64. *A ball or two at all*—Standing in this way even if the bullet passes through the body it might not result in death if it misses a vital part of the body like the heart. This is Sir Lucius own way of putting things. To him either the bullet kills or *does no harm*. Acres however is not convinced that a bullet might pass through the body without doing any harm at all.

65-66. *Clean through me! . . . . me*—Acres is extremely terrified at the thought.

67-68. *Ay-may they . . . . bargain*—Yes, the bullet might really pass through the body without harm if you stand in this manner. That is only one advantage of it. In addition to it the other one is, that this pose is the most genteel. (It is proper, because to be shot in the chest shows bravery).

69. *Look'ee*—Look you.

As life—As much willingly.

70. *In an awkward . . . . one*—It would be the same to me in what posture I am shot, if I am killed.

71. *I will stand edgeways*—Acres thus proves himself a determined coward. He would insist on standing sideways for he cannot conjure up enough courage to face his adversary.

72-73. *Sure they . . . . us*—I hope the duellists are not going to stay back and give us the disappointment of missing the chance to fight. Acres, however, would have welcomed it most.

75. *Hey!—what!—coming*—This nervousness would be really worth seeing on the stages throwing audience into peels of laughter.

76. *Yonder*—Ahead.

76-77. *Getting over the stile*—Crossing over the fence. *Stile* are the stops or some provision other than gate enabling passengers to get over or through fence or wall. But excluding cattle.

99. *We . . . . we . . . . won't run*—That shows that Acres is horribly terrified so much so that he starts stammering and is thinking of running away.

80. *Run!*—Sir Lucius is surprised to find that Acres can go to that extent.

82. *What the devil . . . . etc.*—Sir Lucius gets irritated at cowardice.

84. *Quite so bold*—The braggart cannot of course admit he is afraid. He is only not "*quite so bold.*"

86. *Consider your honour*—Think what a set-back your honour will get if you withdraw.

87-88. *Do, Sir Lucius. . . .honour*—Please do continue to remind me of my honour being on stake in the matter. That might urge me on.

90-91. Acres is almost at the point of breaking down with nervousness.

92. *Valour will come and go*—He admits that his courage often rises in him but equally often seems to be failing him.

93. *Keep it fast*—Hold it tight lest it should leave you.

94—96. The speeches of Acres are farcical and tremendously ludicrous in this scene. The more afraid he is, the more funny he is becoming.

94. *I doubt. . . .going*—I am afraid my courage is leaving me.

95. *Sneaking off*—Going away stealthily like a coward. To run away furtively.

96. *Oozing out. . . .hands*—Leaking out through the palms of my hands.

97. *Your honour—your honour*—Acres had asked Sir Lucius to keep him reminded of his honour, so he does it.

98. *Safe at Clod Hall*—I wish I had stayed back at my house and had not so endangered myself here.

98. *Could be. . . . . .aware*—In his extreme nervousness he could be shot and killed before he was aware of the whole thing.

100. *Your most obedient*—polite language. I am your most obedient servant.

102. *Just like myself. . . .office*—Sir Lucius takes Faulkland to be Beverley and Capt. Absolute to be his second. So he says that as he has come there to be the second to Acres, perhaps he also has come as his friend's (Beverley's) Second.

103-4. *Then to proceed. . . . . .account*—After helping your

friend as second you might fight a duel with me as I would at first be Acres' second and then dispose of my duel.

105. *What Jack !*—The coward is heartened to find a friend near him.

106. *Beverley's at hand*—Beverley is quite near. Said to tease Acres but Sir Lucius takes it to mean that the other gentleman (Faulkland) is Beverley. He addresses him thus.

107-8. *I don't blame. . . .civilly*—I don't object to your polite address to the gentleman. Sir Lucius is a firm believer in formal courtesies even if dealing with his enemies.

110. *Measure the ground*—Measure the distance to be kept between the duellists.

111. *My weapons, Sir* !—Faulkland is surprised for he has not come to fight at all.

112. Acres explains his mistake to Sir Lucius and introduces Faulkland.

113. *Particular*—Special.

116. *Upon my word*—I speak truly.

117. *Mighty provoking*—Very irritating.

118-20. *As there are. . . .sitting out*—One of the most silly arguments from this duel-maniac. He says that since three of them are going to fight duels, he should not refuse to participate in the fourth one. To him it requires hardly any basis to start a duel. To fight for a trifle can be understood but what would one say is the logic of fighting merely to supply the missing person.

119. *Cantankerous*—Quarrelsome.

120. *Sitting out*—Staying away.

121-22. *Oh, pray. . . . .Lucius*—Capt. Absolute thus ironically mocks at Sir Lucius' fondness for duels. Even if there is no offence, Faulkland should fight only to oblige Sir Lucius.

123. *Bent on the matter*—Resolved to fight a duel.

124. *No, no . . . . . etc.*—Bob Acres seizes upon the first opportunity to avoid fighting.

124-25. *Bear my . . . . Christian*—As a Christian should bear hardships patiently, so would I bear my disappointment at my duel not coming off, patiently.

126. *Occasion*—Cause.

126-27. *If it is . . . . alone*—If you agree with me in the matter, I would decide not to fight at all. This is what Acres had wanted all along and luckily the opportunity has presented itself.

128. *I may not be trifled with*—Sir Lucius gets angry at Acres' cowardice and says that he is a man not to be taken unseriously. It is actually Sir Lucius who cannot bear the disappointment of the cancellation of the duel even if he was only a second to it.

130-31. *If that gentleman . . . . him*—If Faulkland is agreed to take the place of Beverley in the duel *i.e.*, fight you instead of him.

131—32. *I can't see . . . . . thing*—I don't know why it should not be as good as if Beverley him elf was fighting. At its face the logic seems to be absurd but then duelling in itself was an equally absurd thing. Sir Lucius is not mad when he suggests that as a representative of Beverley, Faulkland can fight, for the chivalric laws of duelling permitted this.

134-35. *A fellow, you see . . . . face*—coward person, because he has not come here to face me.

135-36. *I'd made . . . . directly*—I'd give him such a good lesson in the duel that he would give up his claim to Lydia at once.

137. *Let me set you right*—Capt. Absolute now withdraws his joke and tells the truth about himself.

139-40. *As his pretensions . . . . characters*—As in the name of Beverley as well as of Capt. Absolute, he claims the hand of Lydia.

140-41. *He is ready . . . please*—He is prepared to defend his claim by fighting you as either gentleman.

142. *This is lucky . . . etc.*—Sir Lucius is glad that there will be a duel after all.

146. *You would not . . . . unnatural*—You don't think I shall behave in such an impossible manner so as to fight my special friend.

Oozed away . . . vengeance—Sir Lucius again feels disappointed with Acres' refusal to fight and gets angry and bitterly sarcastic. He remarks that Acres' courage has certainly oozed (Acres' own word for it) away with a surprising effect in the fullest sense of the word. *With a vengeance* is a colloquial phrase meaning, in a higher degree than was expected or desired.

149. *Odds back and abettors*—Once the danger has been warded off, the creative instinct of Acres returns and he swears in the name of those who would back and assist a man into fighting even if he is unwilling to do so.
Abettors—One who assists.

150. *I'll be . . . . heart*—Acres now asks Sir Lucius to go ahead with his duel and agrees to act as his second with pleasure.

150—54. *If you should . . . pleasure*—It is now Acres' turn to have a joke at the cost of Sir Lucius. He uses the same language that Sir Lucius had used for him.

153. *Blunderbus Hall*—The home of Sir Lucius.

155-56. *You are . . . . coward*—Sir Lucius tries to provoke Acres by calling him a 'coward'. It was enough to call a man a coward to give him offence for a duel but Acres does not take it so seriously. He protests but does not challenge.

159. *Well, Sir*—Yes I have called you a coward ; now what can you do about it ?

161. *Coward may . . . . in joke*—That is Acres' excuse for not taking offence and challenging him to a duel.

161-62. *If you had . . . poltroon*—'Coward' is not an offensive word to Acres ; but if he had been called a poltroon (that also means a spiritless coward) then......" Some would expect Acres to complete his sentence by saying

that, then he would feel offended and challenge him. But a sense of anti-climax is brought when he only says that then he would think Sir Lucius a very ill-bred man. Even poltroon would not be very offensive according to Acres' code of honour.

164-165. *Ill-bred man*—Not a gentleman.

166. *You are . . . . . notice*—Thus Sir Lucius dismisses Acres with a further insulting remark.

169-70. Capt. Absolute now extracts fun at the expense of Acres. He taunts and jibes in the language Acres had earlier used himself to show that he was a very brave person and to frighten Beverley. The emptiness of that bragging not only discloses Acres but puts him in a very ridiculous position.

171. *Ay—at home !*—He admits that he does kill a man every week but only at home.

172. *'Tis we must begin*—Since Acres is not prepared to fight let us start our duel.

173. *My little counsellor*—That is how he calls his sword for, like an advocate, it would establish the truth of his stand by its success.

174. *Resign the lady*—Give up his claim to Lydia.

175. *Without . . . . . . him*—Without the sword being used against him. In case Capt. Absolute withdraws his claim to Lydia there would be no offence and no cause for a duel.

177. *Amicable suit*—A case settled by friendly negotiations and agreement.
Here's my reply—He proceeds forward with his sword drawn.

178. *Knock*—Hit ; strike.

179-80. *Bind . . . . . . behaviour*—Binding refers to putting a man under legal constraint of keeping good behaviour. Only a magistrate can impose such an obligation. David uses the word indiscriminately, as if Sir Anthony was a magistrate and could compel his master to behave properly.

181. *Put up*—Put up your sword. Desist from fighting.

182. *How came you in a duel*—How was it that you got yourself involved in fighting a duel.

184. *'Twas he called on me*—I did not challenge him but he called me out and I had to accept as a gentleman to save my honour.

184-85. *You know, Sir . . . . . . Majesty*—As a soldier in the king's Army I have to keep up its prestige and so I could not refuse a challenge.

186. *Pretty fellow*—Nice person, ironically said.

188-89. *How durst. . . . . subject*—How did you dare to draw your sword given to you by the King, against a subject of the king himself ?

191. *Without explaining his reasons*—He did not tell me why he was challenging me ; so how can I tell you that.

192-93. Sir Anthony now questions Sir Lucius to explain his reasons. The trifling explanations from everybody, as they come out, explain everybody's mistake and help in bringing the play to a happy end.

195. *Brook*—Tolerate ; endure.

199-200. *Let's have . . . . . ladies*—She has confused the meaning of the word honour in the sense of a lady's chastity. So she remarks, let us not indelicately discuss this topic of chastity before the ladies.

201. *Intimidate*—Frighten. Why did you so frighten us by agreeing to fight a duel.

201-202. *Terrified to death*—Very much afraid.

203. *For fear . . . . . escape*—Ironically spoken. Did she get afraid lest I might be killed and be lost to her or else she was afraid I might escape death at the hands of my enemy and live to trouble her ?

204-5. *No . . . . . convinced*—You should not make references to your past quarrels. She is perfectly convinced now of your sincere love and accepts you.

207. *I believe . . . . . . silence*—Sir Lucius is convinced that Lydia corresponded with him under the name of Delia and

since she does not want to disclose that fact she is keeping silent. Since she loves him she would not accept Capt. Absolute.

209. *What do you mean*—Lydia is afraid, her further silence may now be misinterpreted ; so she at once demands clarification from Sir Lucius and sets all doubts about herself at rest. With her avowal of faithfulness to Capt. Absolute Delia's identity is also soon established and a further complication in the plot is resolved.

211. *Trifling*—Light-heartedness.

212. *'Tis true, Sir*—It is true that we should be serious. And now Lydia affirms her love to Capt. Absolute.
Reproof—Rebuke that I should not trifle with ths serious matter.

213. *This gentleman*—Capt. Absolute.

213-14. *Solicit . . . . . affections*—Request that he would also love me in return.

215. *Oh ! mv . . . . . so ?*—Capt. Absolute is very happy to get this confession of faith from Lucius.

216-221. Addressed to Sir Lucius.

217. *Affront*—Insult.
Affirm—Assert.

218. *Intentional*—Deliberate ; knowingly given.

219-20. *As you must . . . . . injury*—As you have seen, I am prepared to fight if there is a genuine cause for it.

220-21. *You shall . . . . . . inadvertency*—I am also gladly prepared to make amends if I have unknowingly inflicted some injury to your feelings. If I have, I beg pardon for it. Thus delighted that Lydia is now his; he is in no mood to fight if he can honourably avoid it. Remember that he accepted the challenge without even caring to know the cause in a desperate mood.

222-23. *But for . . . . whatever*—In case of Lydia, however, I don't withdraw my claim for her hand, even if I have to fight anyone for it.

While honoured . . . . approbation—As long as she is kind and affectionate to me, and gives me her approval.

225. *I give up all my claim*—Acres is only happy that he can save his life ; so he readily resigns all his claim, not only for the lady's hand but for *anything in the world.* He is prepared even to live a bachelor if trying to get a wife means endangering his life.

229-30. *An affront . . . . obligation*—When somebody politely and decently accepts his offending someone else, it becomes the duty of the other gentleman to pardon him.

230. *Obligation*—Duty.

231-32. *If she . . . . writing*—If she thinks it proper to deny that she wrote these letters—and he produces letters written by Mrs. Malaprop fully convinced that they were written by Lydia.

233-35. Mrs. Malaprop desperately tries to save the situation by trying to check Sir Lucius from *dissolving* (disclosing) the letters.

236. *Old gentlewoman*—What an irony that the self-styled romantic Delia should be called 'old'. Mrs. Malaprop must have felt offended as any other woman, howsoever old, in her place would have been. She doesn't spare Sir Lucius and calls him a "barbarous Vandyke".

240. *Ungrateful as you are*—You have not proved yourself to be delicate enough by accepting a lady's request (not to disclose the letters).

241. *I own . . . . impeachment*—I accept your tender accusations.

244. *Barbarous*—Uncultured.

245-46. *More . . . . benignity*—When you come to know more about my kindness in writing to you those letters.

246-47. *Perhaps I . . . . . addresses*—Then it might be that I can be persuaded to accept your offer of love. Thus Mrs. Malaprop further shows her tomfoolery in still being convinced that Sir Lucius loves her or would readily accept her. She thus seems to be more incorrigble than even Faulkland.

248. *Sensible*—Conscious.

249. *Condescension*—Stooping down and favouring me with your love.

249-50. *Put this trick upon*—Befooled.

250. *Beholden*—Indebted ; obliged.

252. *That lady*—Lydia.

253. *Delia*—Mrs. Malaprop.

Into the bargain—In addition to that.

Thus Lucius with his typical politeness and manners and yet with bitter sarcasm ridicules Mrs. Malaprop. He not only rejects her but makes her look like a worthless piece of clod no one cares for.

255. *Unprovided for*—Not provided with a wife.

256. *Little valour*—Ironically said. Small brave man.

256-57. *Make your fortune*—Gain wealth by marrying a rich lady.

258. *Odds wrinkles*—Perhaps he has Mrs. Malaprop in mind, the only unprovided for but rich lady present there.

259-60. *If ever I give . . . . again*—If ever in future I indulge in such a thing as a duel, get killed and thus give you an opportunity to embalm my body for preserving it till burial.

260. *Dunce*—Fool.

262. *Cast down*—Disappointed ; sad.

263. *You are . . . . yet*—You are very charmingly young. Sir Anthony chivalrously flatters Mrs. Malaprop who cannot see the joke in it.

264. *Oh, Sir Anthony* !—Mrs. Malaprop is really glad to hear Sir Anthony's praise and protests with inner pleasure.

Barbarians—Uncultured persons.

(Stage Direction.) *All retire . . . etc.*—The troubles with everybody else have been resolved, so they are made to walk aside. The pair of Julia and Faulkland is left in the forefront of the stage for now their reconciliation follows.

265. *Dejected*—Sad with disappointment.

Sullen—Irritated.

266-67. *There was . . . . me*—There was at least some truth in the story of a duel he had told me. Julia wrongly thinks that perhaps he had also come there to fight a duel. So she repents of her attitude to him.

267-68. *How true . . . . so weak*—Most ironical because she talks of the correctness of a woman's judgment at the moment her judgment has gone wrong. She regrets of a woman's weak determination for inwardly her decision not to marry Faulkland is getting weaker and weaker.

269-70. *How can I . . . . deserve*—How dare I beg your forgiveness which I do not deserve for having offended you so gravely.

270. *I dare not presume*—I cannot venture to hope beforehand that your pardon must follow.

270-71. *Hope . . . . Penitence*—When someone is repentant for having committed a certain mistake, it is natural that hope for everything getting well in the end, must also be there. Since Faulkland is repenting for being suspicious of Julia's love, he now hopes for her forgiving him and accepting him again.

272-74. *You have . . . . resent it*—You have not been more at fault in your ungenerous treatment of mine than I am now in not having a will strong enough to resent it.

274-75. *As my . . . . love*—Since my heart tells me that my weakness in not resenting your conduct is due to my unbounded love for you.

275-76. *I should be . . . . yours*—It would be unkind on my part not to admit that you committed your faults also because of some love. Love has been the cause of the weaknesses of us both. This avowal of love brings quick forgiveness and reconciliation.

279. *I should be . . . . indeed*—I feel happy and blessed in your avowal of love.

279. *warrant*—I am sure.

280. *Have a hand in the matter*—Have a say in your case, to settle things well, of course.

283. *Delicay . . . . for you*—The jealousy and suspicion in Faulkland is due to, as he says, his warm and sensitive love for you.

284. *Mend*—Reform ; change.

287. *But what is content*—There is no person here who was dissatisfied and is not fully satisfied now.

288-89. *It will be . . . .better*—It would be very unfortunate for me to see that other people have also remained dissatisfied and disappointed. That shows Sir Lucius is inwardly generous after all.

291. *The same*—A similar joy.

292. *Vexed*—Irritated.

292-93. *Odds tabors and pipes*—Acres now wishes to see everything end in marriage bells and the consequent enjoyments of drinking and dancing and music. So he swears by the musical instruments.

Tabor—A small drum to accompany pipe.

293. *Fiddles*—A musical instrument like a violin.

293-94. *The New Rooms*—The New Assembly Rooms located in the Upper Town, near the Circus, were opened in 1771. Music was provided here for ball dance.

294. *I insist . . . . there*—I wish we must all meet there, to celebrate the betrothal of the lovers.

295. *Gad*—By God.

296. *Single lades*—Bachelors and widowers.

298. *Are stolen from us*—By this proposal of dancing our beloveds are as good as stolen from us, because everybody would like to dance with them and they will not be available for our pleasure—to act as partners with us.

The other interpretation can be that they have, for the time being, quietly slipped away to congratulate one another on this happy occasion. There will be a need of putting a comma after the words 'I hope' to get this interpretation, which seems to be more plausible.

299-300. *Yours for . . . . imagination*—Your betrothed Lydia ought to be congratulated for having checked herself from her misguided romantic whims quite in time, so that she has got you now.

301. *Which might . . . . heart*—Her misguided whim to find happiness in eloping with a poor man,might have resulted into that innocent girl, Lydia, marrying some undesirable person and thus being unhappy all her life.

301. *And mine*—My beloved Julia deserves congratulations for.

302-5. *For having . . . . adored*—She has, with her sincerity and gentleness, reformed me of my suspicious nature, with which I was making Julia miserable, although I loved her most and was causing her to suffer when I ought to have loved her ardently.

306. *The bitters*—The bitter experiences ; miseries.

307. *The sweets*—The happy experiences ; joys.

308. *You always . . . . yourself*—You ever brought misery upon yourself with your own faults.

310. *Was always obliged to me for it*—Lydia in good humour completes Capt. Absolute's sentence and understands what he wanted to say. What Capt. Absolute meant was that the cause of his troubles was Lydia.

310-11. *Mr. Modesty*—She addresses Capt. Absolute with a playful sarcasm because he had stopped short due to, as he meant to show, his modesty.

312. *Unalloyed*—Pure.

As general—As common to all.

313. *Study . . . . so*—Be careful to keep up our happiness unalloyed.

314-20. This speech of Julia is full of the sentimental jargon of the century. Its diction is artificial and the meaning has been lost in verbosity. The sentiments are too pious and idealistic and are clothed in long drawn out metaphors deliberately thrust in.

314. *Hope . . . . bliss*—We are so hopeful that we imagine only a happy future for ourselves.

314-16. *Let us. . . .lasting*—Let us not imagine ourselves too happy for it is impossible to achieve continued great delight.

316. *When hearts. . . .fortunes*—When those that deserve to be happy unite in being happy together.

317-18. *Virtue. . . .flowers*—They would be virtuous and enjoy real happiness without wishing for painful thrills.

318-19. *Ill-judging passion*—Passion which checks man from judging things correctly.

319. *Will force. . . .wreath*—Passion will bring to them those thrills also that bring more pain with them than pleasure.

319-20. *Whose thorn. . . .dropt*—When the leaves are gone, that is, the freshness of the thrilling joys has disappeared they will turn into pain. When a flower is fresh, the thorn is not minded so much but as the flowers wither away the thorns make them too offensive. Similarly passionate thrilling joys give much pleasure in the beginning but as the freshness of their first impulse has disappeared they become painful.

The flower and the wreath are brought in as a metaphor and the metaphor has been kept throughout the speech. It is however so long-drawn-out and is clothed in such an artificial diction that the sense is almost lost to the reader.

EPILOGUE

Mrs. Bulkley—She acted the part of Julia in the play. She also spoke the second Prologue spoken on the tenth night.

Line 1. *Ladies, for you*—The dramatist had addressed his prologues to men, so he addresses the epilogue to women telling them of their superiority over men, who feel happy in being hen-pecked husbands.

2. *He'd try. . .play*—Although according to Sheridan's theory of comedy, it has nothing to do with preaching a moral here he tries to extract one from his play, for the sake of the ladies.

Coax—Persuade by blandishment.

3. *One moral's plain*—There is one moral which should be very obvious to everybody.

Cried I—She told the poet.

Without more fuss—Without trying to create fuss by discussing and going deep into the matter of moral in the play.

4. *Social happiness*—Happiness in society.

Rests on us—Depends on women.

5. *The drama*—Our play, *The Rivals*.

Damned—Condemned by the public.

6. *Love gilds. . . .plot*—In our play love gives brightness and attraction to the scenes and the actions of women further the movement of plot.

7. *From every. . . .due*—In every rank (class) of men, women command obedience.

Our—Women's.

8. *D'ye doubt*—Do you doubt my statement.
The world's . . . . true—Then go out from the theatre to the great stage of the world where men and women are acting their parts. You will see there that my statement of women's superiority is true.

9. *The cit*—The citizen.

Well skille'd . . . . strife—The citizen, who is clever in avoiding quarrels with his wife.

10. *Will sup . . . . wife*—Even if he decides to dine outside his home in order to avoid a quarrel with his wife, he must first take her permission.

11. *John Trot*—This was a common name for an awkward person or a rustic. Lord Chesterfield made it familiar in his *Letters*.
His friend . . . . the same—Similarly another person might also do the same, *i.e.*, dine abroad to save domestic unhappiness.

12. *But then . . . . his dame*—He also cannot continue to do so without informing his wife.

13. *The surly . . . . to rule*—The ill-tempered village landlord decides at noon to assert his authority over all the household.

14. *And half . . . . fool*—For half a day he might continue to assert himself with oaths and by telling his wife that she is a fool.

15. *Convinced at night . . . . says*—By the time the night comes he gets convinced that women should command men. So man becomes a vanquished, *i.e.*, defeated victor and tells his wife . . . .

16. *Kate*—A common name for rustic women.
You women . . . . ways—Women are clever in coaxing men to agree with them. Thus women have their way in everything.

17. *Jolly Toper*—Pleasure-loving drunkard. *Chides*—Scolds. *Tardy blade*—His gay companions sluggish in drinking.

18. *Till reeling . . . . aid*—Till the drunkard gets so lost in intoxication that he starts calling his wife's name in the company of fellow-drunkards.

18. *Bacchus*—The god of wine. Here it refers to the drunkard referred earlier as jolly Toper.

19. *Then with . . . . swim*—Then with each toast that is proposed he fills his cup to the brim.

Bumper—A cup full of wine.

20. *Chloe*—A common name for 'a loving wife'.

Kisses . . . . brim—Kisses the brim of his bubbling wine-cup in the name of his loving wife.

The examples of a country landlord and a drunkard have been given to show how they yield to the influence of their better halves. Similar cases of a statesman, a poor peasant and a soldier will now be enumerated to show that the hand that rocks the cradle is really the power that rules the world.

21. *Will sometimes . . . . eyes*—Even the great and wise statesmen of a country are not only not immune from their wives' influence but see through her eyes and most of what they advise others, comes from their wives.

23-25. *The servile . . . . a place*—If a suitor comes to a statesman his suit is not decided by the statesman but by his wife, to whom he looks for guidance in the matter. The suitor looks at her changing face and knows his fate. If she smiles favourably, he will gain preferment with the statesman ; if she frowns at him, he will be dismissed with disgrace ; if she courteously bows to him, her husband will certainly grant him a pension and if she nods at him he will be given a post by her husband.

26-27. *Nor with . . . . wife*—In the lower strata of society also a husband does not look at his mistress or hear his wife with lesser fear than a husband in the higher rank. The woman's superiority is universal.

28. *Poorest soil*—Having the most infertile land to till.

29. *The child . . . . toil*—Who is born in a poor family and all that he has got as inheritance is a life of hard labour.

30. *From radiant . . . . light*—From the ardent love of his impartial *i. e.*, fair-minded wife.

31. *Steals . . . . night*—Gets a spark of loving inspiration that illumines his otherwise dark life.

32. *Dear Spark !*—The prizeless spark of his wife's love.

22-23. *That oft . . . . . . knows*—The warmth of his lady's love is the only warmth which he enjoys all through the troublesome chilly days of winter.

34. *The wand'ring Tar*—The sailor that wanders on the distant seas.

Pho not . . . . pressed—Who has not embraced his wife for the past several years for he has been on the seas.

35. *The widowed partner*—His wife separated from the husband's company.

His day of rest—When they are together away from the toil of sailing.

36. *The cold deck*—Because being separated from the wife it lacks the warmth of her love.

37. *Still . . . . . loved*—Still mutters the song liked by his wife.

Ditty—Song.

Susan—A common name for a loving wife separated from her husband.

38. *While around. . . .blown*—When the tune of that ordinary song is spread by the wind.

39. *The boatswain. . . .tone*—The boatswain starts whistling in a soft tone hearing the ditty.

41. *Pants*—Aspires ; longs.

Nancy—A nickname for a soldier's wife.

42-43. *But eve . . . . . . a dies*—But if before going to the battlefield he should know that his wife is unhappy, all his heroism would be gone and instead of behaving bravely he would rather tremble with apprehensions for his beloved.

44. *By war . . . . fear*—The heart of a soldier that has har-

dened like steel with the thoughts of fighting in a war for his country's honour.

45. *Droops at a sigh*—Starts fainting at a sigh from his wife.

46. *Nice-judging few*—A few people blessed with fine judgment.

47. *Only Beauty's due*—Praise Beauty in exactly the terms it deserves.

48-51. *Though friends. . .Beauty throws*—The fastidious critics in the audience, although they would like the undercurrent of love in the play, would not be fully happy with the part played by women in this play. They will think that the victories of a woman remain incomplete and unsatisfactory unless in her talks she gives the evidence of possessing a refined wit and her charming beauty is supplemented with a capacity for sound judgment.

52-53. If a woman had good sense and real merit, the lover would not want anything else in her.

54. *Shamed . . . . eyes*—The scholarly critics will behave sensibly or else they would feel ashamed seeing in the women enough sense and merit.

55. *Beaux . . . . wise*—Similarly the gallant lovers would also learn from women whom they love.

56-57. *Would gladly . . . Love*—in order to be better devoted to their ladyloves, they would enkindle their lamp of knowledge from their torches of love *i.e.*, learn whatever they can from their beloveds, who possess good sense and merit and are therefore fit to make their gallant lovers wise.

THE IMPORTANT MISTAKES OF MRS MALAPROP

ACT I. SCENE II

Line 190. *Illiterate*—Obliterate ; which means to efface or to remove outright.

203. *Extirpate*—Exculpate or Exonerate ; meaning to defend.

204. *Controvertible*—Incontrovertible ; sure. She forgets to put the word *in*.

227. *Intricate*—Obstinate.

233. *Misanthropy*—Misanthrope or Misogynist. A *Misanthrope* is a hater of mankind and a *misogynist*, of women. The latter is the more likely idea in the mind of Mrs Malaprop. It is also possible that she might be having an echo of *Moliere's* drama '*The Misanthrope*' in her mind while this word slips out of her mouth.

246. *Laconically*—Ironically : The word she uses means '*briefly*' or '*concisely*'.

250. *Progeny*—Prodigy. A *prodigy* is a wonder child, having achievements much above his age, while *progeny* means offspring. How absurd and funny should Mrs. Malaprop look at this use !

253. *Simony*—Ciphering, *i. e.* mathematics.

Fluxions—Fractions ; borrowed from calculus.

Paradoxes—Rhetoric. A paradox is a contradictory statement. She takes this also as a branch of learning, hence she may be gussed as having rhetoric in mind.

254. *Inflammatory*—Informatory. Literally, inflammatory

might mean knowledge that inflames the brain. A young man with little knowledge might well feel he has much.

256. *Diabolical*—It is also an example of malapropism. She misuses the word, perhaps because it sounds well with '*mathematical*' and '*astronomical*.'

251. *Ingenuity*—Ingenuouness. *Ingenuity* means 'cleverness' whereas what she wants to convey is exactly the opposite of it—'simplicity' or 'artlessness', which is the meaning of the word *ingenuousness*.

259. *Artifice*—The word actually means 'trickery', whereas she means to say 'artlessness.' In both the above cases of Malapropism, she appears most foolish indeed !

Supercilious—Superficial, *i.e.* a little. Supercilious means showing haughty indifference.

261. *Geometry*—She means 'geography.'

262. *Contagious*—Contiguous; which means 'adjoining' whereas contagious is that disease which spreads by contact.

263. *Orthodoxy*—Orthography; spelling of words.

266. *Reprehend*—Apprehend or comprehend which means 'to understand.' Reprehend would mean 'censure.'

268. *Superstitious*—Superfluous.

294. *Invocations*—Protestations.

295. *Illegible*—Ineligible *i.e.* unsuitable match for Lydia.

304. *Intuition*—Tuition; guardianship.

308. *Artificial*—Artful; clever.

323. *Malevolence*—Benevolence. She means her favour or kindness.

325. *Locality*—Loquacity *i.e.* talkativeness.

ACT II. SCENE II

(The Letter to Sir Lucius)

33. *Incentive*—Instinctive.

34. *Induction*—Attraction or seductive power.

35. *Domestic combination*—Domestic Intercourse or domestic unity.

Commotion—Emotion.

36. *Superfluous*—Superficial.

37. *Punctuation*—Punctiliousness ; petty formalities.

38. *Infallible*—Ineffable.

39. *Criterion*—Expression.

ACT III. SCENE III

Line 2. *Accommodation*—Recommendation.

3. *Ingenuity*—Ingenuousness, which means simplicity or frankness. *Ingenuity* means cleverness, the exact opposite of what she intends conveying.

13. *Ineffectual*—Intellectual. Mrs. Malaprop thinks she really has intellectual qualities but the word '*ineffectual*' used by her is ironically correct here because her qualities are, no doubt, *ineffectual*—useless.

25. *Pine-apple*—Pinnacle. Perhaps she has confused her words with the phrase"apple of one's eye" or 'pinnacle's sound' with "apple".

34. *Exploded*—Exposed. She means she discovered the affair—as we know she did it through Lucy.

35. *Conjunctions*—Injunctions ; orders.

36. *Preposition*—Proposition ; proposal. That of Capt. Absolute desiring to marry her.

38. *Particle*—Article.

40. *Hydrostatics*—Hysterics ; nervousness. Hydrostatics is a branch of mechanics concerned with the pressure and equilibrium of liquids at rest. How absurd is Mrs. Malaprop's use of the word in this case !

41. *Persisted*—Desisted ; refrained. Persisted is exactly the opposite—continued.

42. *Interceded*—Intercepted.

77. *Reprehend*—Comprehend; understand.

78. *Oracular tongue*—Vernacular language.

79. *Derangement*—Arrangement.

Epitaphs—Epithets.

Ironically enough this is what she exactly does. Derangement means the opposite of arrangement. Malapropism is surely a derangement of words.

101. *Perpetrated*—Formulated. Only a crime is perpetrated while a scheme is formulated.

215. *Allegory*—Alligator ; a sort of reptile of the crocodile family.

ACT IV. SCENE II

Line 6. *Caparisons*—Comparisons. Caparisons means 'equipment' or 'outfit'.

10. *Alacrity*—Affability.

11. *Adulation*—Animation.

She does not know the meaning of the words alacrity (briskness) and adulation (base flattery)' but only uses them because they sound pompous and mouthful.

12. *Pyhsiognomy*—Phraseology. 'Physiognomy' means facial expressions. Since she is talking of conversation and language what she must have in mind is phraseology. She praises grammatical correctness in others while she herself has none of it.

52. *Affluence*—Influence.

158. *Compilation*—Appellation.

169. *Anticipate*—Retrospection. To anticipate is to look forward to the future, which is not possible to do about the past. Mrs. Malaprop actually wants to say : let us not think about the past any more but consider only the future.

170. *Restrospection*—Anticipation (Retrospection means to think about the past).

256. *Analyzed*—Paralyzed.

ACT V. SCENE I

Line 192. *Paracide*—Parricide, which means killing one's father and cannot be what Mrs. Malaprop meant. Perhaps she used this word because it seemed to go well with suicide.

Simulation—Dissimulation in the sense of disguise or counterfeiting. Here again Mrs Malaprop has fallen a prey to the lure of a word's sound.

193. *Antistrophe*—Catastrophe ; tragedy. Antistrophe is a term for a stanza in an ode.

198. *Enveloped*—Developed ; divulged or described.

213. *Perpendiculars*—Particulars.

246. *Participate*—Precipitate ; hasten.

253. *Petrifactions*—This is a word correctly used. In earlier editions 'putrefactions' was used and it seems probable for Mrs. Malaprop to commit at least that much of a mistake. Otherwise we will have to accept that she is often capable of using a big word correctly, even if it is just by chance.

Derbyshire petrifactions are the fossilized remains in the limestone caverns of the Peak District. Mrs. Malaprop means that the girls stand there as dead as fossils. They ought to rush to the place of the duel to save people's lives from harm, for her own Sir Lucius is also involved.

255. *Felicity*—Velocity or speed.

260. *Exhort*—Escort or guide.

261. *Envoy*—Convoy ; an escort.

262. *Precede*—Proceed.

ACT V. SCENE III

Line 204. *Delusions*—Allusions.

233. *Dissolve*—Resolve.

235. *Illuminate*—Elucidate ; explain.

244. *Vandyke*—Vandal ; a member of a certain barbaric German race.

SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

ACT I. Scene i

(1) Coachman : *Ay ! master thought. . . .an hour's warning,* (Act I. Sc, I, L. 12-14).

Ans. Fag, the servant of Capt. Absolute happens to meet Thomas, the coachman of Sir Anthony, in a street of Bath. On enquiry from Fag, as to how he is being seen at Bath, Thomas explains, that his master along with his ward Julia and other servants, has also come. He continues to inform Fag in these lines that their sudden departure for Bath was necessitated by Sir Anthony's fear of another attack of gout in the near future. So in order to avoid that sickness by being in Bath, where the mineral waters assure safety against it, Sir Anthony orders his carriage to be ready instantly. Within an hour of Sir Anthony's order to the servants to get every-thing ready, they started for Bath.

The lines refer to the importance of Bath as a health resort, where mineral waters were to be got in abundance as a prevention or cure of many diseases. Thomas' amusing expression, "So he'd a mind to gi't the slip, and whip !" is also notable. Through the coachman, Sheridan also wants to inform us, about the hasty nature of Sir Anthony, in starting within an hour's warning.

(2) Fag. *So it is indeed. Thomas. . . .with me.*

Act I, Sc. I, L. 31-33).

Ans : Fag, the personal servant of Capt. Absolute, has learnt from Thomas, the coachman of Sir Anthony, why he and his master are being seen in Bath unexpectedly. It is now his turn to explain his presence in the fashion-

able town and he starts by mystifying Thomas with the remark that he is no more a servant to Capt. Absolute but has taken up the service of one Ensign Beverley ; yet he ha' not changed his masters. He soon solves Thomas' puzzle by explaining that Capt. Absolute and Ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

Fag cleverly remarks that at present Ensign Beverley is doing his duty at Bath and so he is in his service. The earlier personality of his master, as Capt. Absolute has been put into abeyance for the time being, so Fag has nothing to do with it at the moment.

Fag is certainly indicating in these lines that Capt. Absolute is courting Lydia in the disguise of Ensign Beverley, but since he has yet not given the information to Thomas in as many words, his remark appears puzzling to him. The purpose of Fag in these indirect hints is, that he would like to keep his master's new role a secret.

The lines indicate Fag's wit and sense of humour. The expressions, that his new master, Ensign Beverley is on guard at Bath, and that he has two halves of his personality working at different times, are the examples of his witty humour.

(3) Fag. *Why, then, the cause of all this is. . . . . .days of Jupiter.* (Act I, Sc. I, L. 39-41).

Ans. : In these lines Fag informs his friend Thomas in confident secrecy, why his master has been putting on the name of a poor ensign in place of his real one. The cause of it is, that he has fallen in love. Boasting like a well-read man, Fag remarks, that it is common knowledge that people in love very often put themselves in a disguise in order to win over their objects of love. Nothing is unfair in love and war. Even the greatest god, Jupiter, as is clearly known from various classical stories, used to put himself in various disguises, in order to grab the beautiful women on earth, who appealed to his fancy. Since the god of gods did it, it became a legitimate path for ordinary mortals in love also. The tradition means that the god of love himself appears in

various disguises, whenever men assume them. So is the case with his master Capt. Absolute.

The lines hint at Fag's character. He is clever, witty and proud, trying to give the impression of being as well-read proud, trying to give the impression of being as well read and cultured as his superiors. He also wants to overwhelm his inferior Thomas with his learning and so uses the roundabout and metaphorical language. This has often been considered a weakness of Sheridan to impart even to his servants a wit and language usually not found with them.

(4) Coachman. *When I heard . . . . to the Box.* (Act I, Sc. I, L. 87-90).

Ans. : Fag, who claims superiority to Thomas in fashions and manners, points out to him that the latter is still persisting with the old fashions like wearing a wig. Thomas, the courtybred coachman, being conservative has still preference for wigs. In these lines he laments that the fashion of wearing wigs has gone out of date.

In the eighteenth century this fashion had become very popular, so much to that several varieties of wigs were sold in the market and each variety was the favourite of a particular profession. As the fashion started disappearing, Fag followed suit, but Thomas does not want to give it up. He says that when he heard that lawyers and doctors had given up wearing wigs, he was very apprehensive of their future influence on coachmen. When the members of the bar had started wearing their natural hair, having given up wigs, it was but natural that the coachmen should imitate them. Perhaps unconsciously Thomas wants to equate barristers and coachmen or perhaps he thinks that once gentlemen in different professions give up their distinguishing varieties of wigs, the distinctions between them might disappear and the dignity of high and low professions will be lost.

The speech is indicative of the conservative mind of Thomas and his regard for age-old traditions. In this speech he contrasts well with fashionable Fag. Sheridan through these characters is trying to paint the manners of the age.

ACT I. SCENE II

(5) Lucy. *I asked everywhere . . . . . a Christian to read.* (Act I. Sc. II. L. 15-19).

Ans. : Lucy has just returned to her mistress Lydia, after getting romances and novels for her from the circulating libraries. To the eager enquiries of Lydia about "The Delicate Distress" or "The Memoirs of Lady Woodford", Lucy replies that she looked for the book at many libraries but could not get them. At last she discovered it at the shop of one Mr. Frederick, a bookseller of Bath. It could not be got from there because the condition of the book had become very bad. Lady Slattern Lounger had got it issued and had so soiled it and turned the corners at the top of every significant page, that the book had become unworthy of being read by any cultured person of refined taste and sensibility.

The books referred to by Lucy and similar others, which Lydia was eager to read, throw light upon the character of Lydia. She reads cheap romances and novels, favourite of happy-go-lucky, rich and idle girls of the age. Such girls though showed themselves off as cultured, were not really so, as the habit of Lady Slattern of dog's-earing her books shows. Her name is on the line of 'humour' characters. As the names of Sir Anthony *Absolute*, Lydia *Languish* and *Mrs. Malaprop* indicate their natures, the name of Lady *Slattern Lounger* does hers. *Slattern* means a dirty or slovenly woman and lounger is a person who prefers laziness or lying idle. So is Lady Slattern, a dirty idle woman for she wastes time in reading cheap novels while lying idle and has the habit of dirtying the books by dog's-earing it. Her name suggests a method of characterization followed by Sheridan.

(6) Julia. *This temper . . . . his attachment.* (Act I. Sc. II. L. 138-141).

Ans. : When Julia accused her friend Lydia of being capricious in her love for Capt. Absolute, the latter

offered the counter-accusation that Julia also has been tolerating the whims of Faulkland, allowing him to be imperious over her. Julia denied that she loved the faults of Faulkland.

In this speech Julia admits that Faulkland is of capricious and doubting nature. He thinks that although he loves her very much, Julia does not reciprocate his love equally well This fault of Faulkland has tortured Julia quite often but still she thinks herself indebted to her lover because most of his imperfections arise due to his intense love for her.

This speech of Julia shows her common sense in trying to defend her lover against the charges of a third person, but in her sentimentality, she is also trying to give a round-about explanation of his faults. She seems a little anaemic and her weakness is proved by her tolerance of Faulkland's excesses.

(7) Sir Anthony. *Madam, a circulating library .... fruit at last.* (Act I. Sc. II. L. 240-244).

Ans. Lydia's refusal to obey her aunt about giving up her lover Beverley and accepting Capt. Absolute, brings her displeasure upon her. Sir Anthony thinks that her disrespectable behaviour and her romantic notions are the result of her reading books. Mrs. Malaprop does not quite agree with him for she thinks she has acquired a lot of learning without any evil results. She, however, agrees with Sir Anthony that circulating libraries supply such evil books that are a source of many absurdities in young girls. Sir Anthony remarks that before he came to see Mrs. Malaprop he saw Lucy, her maid, bringing books from a circulating library.

Sir Anthony, in this speech, goes on to assert that circulating libraries are the source of as great evils as was the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. As Eve, tempted by Satan, ate the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and the result was that a lot of evil was brought to the world, similarly these libraries supply a lot of evil knowledge to young girls, who bring about their fall, like Eve, by actually following the romantic absurdi-

ties like elopement etc. A library is like the evergreen Tree in the Garden of Eden, because it supplies books throughout the year. Those who touch the leaves of these books, *i.e.*, those who read them, are soon eager for the fruit also, meaning that they wish to put into practical shape the ideas that they read about in the romances.

This speech of Sir Anthony indicates how the consensus of opinion in Sheridan's time was against female education and how their resentment was often misapplied. So far as the reading of romances from the circulating libraries and their evil effect on young people are concerned, Sir Anthony is perfectly right in remarking that they are a source of diabolical knowledge. But this does not mean that all female education is bad. He is trying to throw away the baby along with the dirty water in the pot. His condemnation of the cheap novels and romances from the circulating libraries, is certainly not too strong. Sheridan, through Sir Anthony, is trying to condemn the unscrupulous writers of these romances but he is also upholding the cause of female education by satirizing Sir Anthony.

(8) Mrs. Malaprop. *But above all . . . . she is saying.* (Act I. Sc. II. L. 262—266).

Ans. Mrs. Malaprop does not agree with Sir Anthony that female education is bad outright, so that a woman should not be taught even the alphabet. In reply to Sir Anthony's question as to what would she like a woman to be taught, she gives a long list of subjects. The interest of her reply lies in the blundering manner in which she speaks and in her attempt to parade her learning and accomplishments. She, at first, enumerates the subjects like Greek Hebrew etc. which she would not like a woman to read ; then she comes to the subjects like accounts and geography of which a girl must have some knowledge.

But, according to Mrs. Malaprop, the most important thing to be taught to a young girl is *orthodoxy* (orthography), *i.e.*, the rules of spelling words rightly. This is to be done so that no girl should misspell or

mispronounce her words, as they usually do. Another reason for the teaching of orthography is that the girl should clearly understand the meaning of what she is saying.

Apart from the fact that the speech shows how much vain and unaccomplished Mrs. Malaprop is, it provides an unconscious and ironical commentary upon her own views. While she would like to teach girls orthography so that they should not mispronounce or misspell, she herself makes a mess of her words and shows how all her education stands wasted in her. As Sir Anthony says, every third word she says is on his side of the question that women should be given no education.

This is one of the most blunderous and therefore the most laughable speeches of Mrs. Malaprop. Her mistakes like *orthodoxy* for 'orthography' and *reprehend* for 'comprehend', and her absurd vanity cause this humour.

ACT II. SCENE I

(9) Fag, *But, with submission . . . . as the will.* Absolute. *Well, take care . . . . too much security* (Act II. Sc. I L. 34—39).

When Fag was back from Sir Anthony's place, he told his master Capt. Absolute that, his father enquired from him the cause of his son's stay at Bath. At that he told him a convincing lie that his master was there to recruit and in further support of his falsehood he gave the precise number of men he had already recruited. Capt. Absolute then asked his servant not to tell more lies than was necessary. The above speech of Fag was made in reply to his master's instructions.

Fag starts very politely and says that a lie needs much further support to uphold it. It is like a money-bill. Just as when a person is to draw a money-bill, he wants it to be certainly honoured, similarly when he tells a lie, he naturally wants it to be fully believed. Just as a money-bill becomes more sure of its being honoured when a third party puts its signatures upon it as a mark of

security, similarly a lie becomes more credible when other lies are given in support of it. Capt. Absolute replies to Fag with the help of the same metaphor. He says that too many lies given in support of a basic lie produce suspicion and make it less convincing, just as too many signatures on the back of the money-bill create suspicion. So if Fag tells unnecessary lies, he will not be believed.

The speech is a good example of the wit and cleverness of Fag. He seems to vie with his master in wit. Capt. Absolute, however, is much his superior and replies him in the same metaphorical vein.

(10) Faulkland. *You throw for . . . . stript of all.* (Act. I. L. 94—97).

This is a speech of Faulkland spoken to Capt. Absolute when the former comes to visit him and is accused of melancholy and capricious nature. He claims superiority to his friend, the captain, as a lover and thinks that his love is most refined and ideal-like. Capt. Absolute's temper, says Faulkland, is entirely different from his. He is like a daring gambler, who while playing at stake does not care whether he wins or loses, because even if he loses, he will again play at stake and succeed in further attempts. What Faulkland is hinting at is that in case Absolute wins Lydia, it is all very good, but even if he fails it will not matter much to him for he will try his luck with other girls. For Faulkland, it is entirely different. He is like the gambler who throws his dice once and for all putting all his fortune on one stake, may he win or lose. He has risked his whole life's happiness with Julia and will never care to look at any other girl. So if he fails to get Julia in marriage, he will be a ruined man. That is why has been so serious in his love-affair and worries so much about it.

The speech shows the sentimentality of Faulkland. He is using beautiful language to illustrate his point, which shows that he is an accomplished man. But in his sentimental idealism he flatters himself as the most ideal lover, who has staked his all on one throw of dice,

whereas he belittles Capt. Absoulte in his own comparison. Faulkland's empty boast of delicate and refined love almost jars on our minds.

(11) Acres. *That she has indeed . . . . . Mrs. Piano's conceit.* (Act II. SCENE I. L. 212—217).

Ans. Acres is here describing to Faulkland how Julia has been happy and cheerful at her place, taking part in all social entertainments. Capt. Absolute has been encouraging Acres to describe more of her, since the capricious and jealous Faulkland was showing foolish discomfiture at the report, whereas a moment before he was all eagerness to enquire about her ladylove's health and well-being. Apparently Faulkland expresses satisfaction that Julia is happy and gay but means that she should not have been so.

Bob Acres, never knowing how he is torturing Faulkland by his exuberant reports of Julia, goes on to confirm that she really has a happy disposition. In addition to that she is also very accomplished. For example, she has a very sweet voice and she is such an expert in playing on harpsichord, with a wonderful skill in matching her voice with the high and low musical notes. Acres now loses himself altogether in the superlative praise of Julia's charming music and invents his own new terms, squallnate, rumblante and quiverante (meaning squalling, rumbling and quivering) on the Italian fashion to describe it. He swears by minims (Acres pronounces it as minnums) and crotchets, the tow terms from musical vocabulary that stand for notes of half value and quarter value of semibreve. He goes on to tell that only a month before in the ball at Mrs. Piano's house, he heard her singing in a very sweet and charming voice.

The speech indicates Acres' hunger to ape the town manners and accomplishments. He has his oaths in the fashion of the young city-bred gallants of Bath and tries to show himself well-informed about music and the fashionable Italian terminology of it.

(12) Faulkland. *Zounds! had she made . . . . managed filly!* —(Act II, Sc. 1. 273—276).

Ans. When in his zeal Bob Acres goes on to describe that Julia has been very gay all along and has even been dancing at all sorts of concerts and balls, Faulkland gets too exasperated. On hearing that she has been dancing even the country-dances, he loses all patience and starts cursing and swearing.

Faulkland swears that if Julia had participated in a minuet or even a cotillion, which is a French dance, he would never have minded that because they are not the dances that express unbounded gaiety, light-heartedness or mirth. But to think that she has all along been participating in the promiscuous country-dances, is intolerable. She must have been skipping and hopping like a monkey all through the night, having all sorts of pleasure-seeking young people jostling together and taking her by the hand in amorous charm. She must have been behaving like a managed filly or a young lively girl, moving all her steps in exuberant gaiety. All this is unbearable to the jealous lover in Faulkland.

The jealousy and suspicion of Faulkland's nature are quite apparent in his speech. The more he is getting vocal in his denunciation of Julia the more foolish is he making himself. He is, however, right in one thing, in referring to the promiscuity of the English country-dances, a fact to which many writers from Sheridan to Byron have again and again referred and objected.

(13) Sir Anthony. *Let her foreclose . . . . . no loss there!*— (Act II, Sc. L. 4224—25).

Ans. Sir Anthony and his son are indulging in an exchange of wit on the question of a wife for Capt. Absolute chosen by his father. When the son remarks that his heart is already engaged to another girl the father wants to send an excuse to her telling that business prevented him from coming to her. The son now becomes more explicit and direct by saying that his vows are pledged to her, meaning that he is engaged to her in marriage. The witty father takes his son's phrase in the

tense that whatever is pledged is a security for borrowed money and can be made the lender's own property if the money is not paid within a certain time.

Sir Anthony asks his son to let his ladylove foreclose his pledged vows, i.e., usurp them or make them her own property, for they are not so valuable as to be worthwhile to be redeemed. Then, he argues, the son also must have been pledged with the vows of the girl, so if neither of the party redeems its pledge, there will be no loss to anyone of them. In short he means that he should break off his relations with his beloved and should have nothing to do with her.

The speech is a good example of Sir Anthony's wit and practical-mindedness. To him the matter of marriage is only a business that can be taken up as and when it suits one. In the battle of wits with his son, the father very cleverly corners his son by asking him to let his vows be foreclosed.

ACT II. SCENE II

(14) Mrs. Malaprop's letter. *Female punctuation* . . . . *my affections*. Act II, Sc. L. 37-39).

Ans. Mrs. Malaprop's maid-servant Lucy discovers Sir Lucius on the North Parade and hands over to him the letter from her mistress written under the name of Delia. Sir Lucius, thinking that it has come from the young niece Lydia, shows great enthusiasm for it and reads it loudly and immediately. In the letter Mrs. Malaprop has informed Sir Lucius of her spontaneous love for him even when she has had only a superficial view of him once.

She goes on to say in the letter that female *punctuation*, that is, punctiliousness, meaning delicate feelings for her honour, prevents her to say any more about her intense love for him. She cannot show all the emotions in her heart on paper. Yet, she wants to add, that it will give her *infallible*, that is ineffable, joy to find Sir Lucius worthy enough of the best expressions of her love.

This quotation from Mrs. Malaprop's letter shows her absurd infatuation for Sir Lucius, even when she has scored half-a-century of years. She is still thinking of matrimony and is so much after that mania that she is not ashamed to keep her correspondence under a false romantic name. The quotation also has good examples of misuse of words by her, in (i) 'punctuation' (ii) 'infallible' and (iii) 'criterion'.

(15) Sir Lucius. *Here are a . . . . . court in Christendom.* (Act II. Sc. II L. 51-53).

Ans. This is the speech of Sir Lucius and has been addressed to Lucy. When he had read the letter of Mrs. Malaprop brought to him by Lucy, he found in it many interesting mistakes and sarcastically called her the queen of dictionary. In these lines also he is commenting upon the misuse of words in the same letter.

Listening to the ironical praise of Sir Lucius, Lucy almost betrays herself by calling her mistress a Lady of experience, for she has given out that the letter was from Lydia, a girl only of seventeen. She saves the situation by adding that even at that small age, she was so very well read. Sir Lucius agrees that a girl who is deeply read in romances and novels should write such emotional letters. But she writes so very carelessly also that many of her words are out of place. She has forced many words into her sentences just as some press-gang or recruiting officer forces quite unwilling men into the army and keeps them confined lest they should escape ! For this purpose they are also kept dead drunk till they are exported to the foreign countries. This being quite an illegal thing, if anyone applied to any court for release, he would at once get it. Similarly the words in the letter are so inappropriately used that anyone could know the blunders and readily agree to release the grossly misapplied words from Mrs. Malaprop's clutches. He means that the mistakes in the letter are most obvious.

The speech of Sir Lucius offers a very good commen-

tary on 'Malapropism', and the way he has put it shows his own wit and intelligence.

ACT III. SCENE I

[16) Sir Anthony. *Her eyes shall be......the girl myself.* (Act III. Sc. I. L. 123-126)

Ans. This is a part of the speech of Sir Anthony to his son, when the latter, having learnt from Fag that the girl of his father's choice was Lydia herself, came before him as a penitent son and offered to marry the girl his father wanted him to accept. He behaved as if he was quite indifferent as to whom his father selected for him; it might be the niece or the aunt as well.

Sir Anthony proposes to send his son to Mrs. Malaprop with a letter of introduction so that he may he allowed to pay his addresses to Lydia as a suitor. But he is angry to find his son so very unromantic and passionless. He has aleady described to him the girl's beauty in detail and believes that her eyes, being so firy and bright will enkindle his passions, just as Prometheus, in Greek mythology is said to have given fire to mankind. If his dull-hearted son is not so intensely inspired in love by her that he should appear mad with excessive joy and impatience, then his father will marry the girls himself, for he at least is not an insensible puppy like his son.

ACT III. SCENE II.

(17) Faulkland. *For such is my.........they meet again.* (Act III. Sc. II. L. 35-39).

Ans. This is the effusion of the sentimental lover Faulkland to Julia on their meeting alone for the first time. He realizes that he has a captious, unsatisfied temper yet he cannot correct himself and accuses Julia of enjoying high spirits and of singing and dancing even in her lover's absence. The information was gathered by him from Bob Acres.

Faulkland candidly admits that he has such a temper that he thinks it a treachery in lover's faith if he enjoys

himself in Julia's absence. He then indirectly upbraids Julia by enunciating an ideal for lovers to which, he thinks, Julia does not conform. According to Faulkland when true lovers are separated, they shed tears for each other in pain and sorrow; these tears are a kind of solemn agreement that they will not be merry or even smile, till they are united. Julia instead of being consistently sad, has been very much gay and cheerful which is a treachery to a lover's ideal.

This speach shows that although Faulkland is fully conscious of his follies of jealousy and suspicion he cannot check himself from them. In his sentimentality, he upbraids Julia and proves himself a lover very, very hard to please. He thus prepares the bitter cup of his own misery and also tortures his beloved. His pious sentiments about idealism in love must have sounded very pleasing to the ears of the eighteenth century audience, who believed in sentimentalism.

(18) Faulkland. *Oh, Julia! . . . . of its birth.* (Act III. Sc. L. 207-109).

Faulkland goes on to find fault with Julia's love, even when she has been giving one proof after another of her sincerity. The fastidious and capricious Faulkland is never satisfied. He even contradicts his own statements in his attempts to upbraid Julia, who, he thinks, might have come to love him not because her heart pleaded so but because of the considerations of some practical advantage, gratitude or filial duty. He boasts that he has age. beauty, money and such other advantages, which could attract any girl.

If a girl's love has not been prompted by love alone but has had the considerations of worldly advantage, like wealth or handsomeness, it is not true love. The delicately sensitive and refined lovers like Faulkland will certainly not be convinced of the purity of such love.

These are Faulkland's clear insinuations against Julia's faithfulness and purity of love. They are such that no self-respecting person can tolerate, nor does Julia tolerate them. She immediately leaves him for she is

disgusted and is in tears. This speech also, like one in the earlier explanation, shows how adept Faulkland is in coining pious maxims and innocent epigrams for others while he has himself been unfair all along.

ACT III. Scene III

(19) Capt. Absolute. *They think our admiration . . . . . both at once.* (Act III, Sc. III. L. 18—23).

Ans. When Capt. Absolute comes to visit Mrs. Malaprop with a letter of introduction from his father, he tries to flatter her and thus to persuade her to allow him a meeting alone with Lydia. He begins by remarking that in this proposal the greatest charm for him was to gain relationship with Mrs. Malaprop, who is reputed to have great intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners and unaffected learning. Mrs. Malaprop, who is vainly boastful of her intellectual qualities, complains that men care more for beauty than knowledge in women.

Capt. Absolute replies that for such a state of affairs women should also share the blame along with men, for they value men's admiration of beauty in them so much that they think it would be useless to try to gain knowledge. In this respect they are just like common garden-trees, which do not show fruit till their attractive flowers have dropped down. Similarly women think it quite unnecessary to try to gain knowledge while beauty persists with them. They come to be intellectually superior only when they have been robbed off their charming youth. Now Capt. Absolute tickles the vanity of Mrs. Malaprop by citing her as an exception. Just as the orange-tree is an exception among trees for it shows its blossoms and fruit together, Mrs. Malaprop is the unique example of a lady possessing both knowledge and beauty.

This speech has two important points to be noted. Capt. Absolute's cleverness and intelligent handling of Mrs. Malaprop and the latter's foolishness and vanity. Absolute has judged her character well and easily over-reaches her.

(20 Capt. Absolute. *Proud of calamity.........doubly bright.* (ACT III. Sc. III. L. 178-181).

Ans. Capt. Absolute has gained the permission of Mrs. Malaprop to see Lydia alone. When he reaches her, he persuades her that he has duped everybody into believing that he was Capt. Absolute whereas he was actually her Beverley. Lydia then talks to him about their planned elopement, to which Absolute readily agrees. She is humoured by Capt. Absolute, in this speech for she has been dreaming of a charming poverty with him, and he pretends to reciprocate her sentiments. Actually he does not believe in what he says here.

Absolute ejaculates that poverty will indeed be enjoyable with Lydia, for they together will then worship the god of love all the while. Not only will they not care for their poverty but will be proud of it. They will be able to enjoy their forfeiture of wealth because in contrast to the surrounding gloom of poverty, their flame of pure love will appear brighter than ever. Thus a brighter love will be their gain of which they will justly be proud.

Obviously, the effusion is sentimental enough and is cleverly used to humour Lydia's caprice. It shows Absolute as a clever man who can adjust himself to any requirements of the changing situation. It also makes clear Lydia's absurd notions.

ACT III. SCENE IV

(21) David. *You are quite.........print shops in Bath.* (Act III. Sc. IV. L. 2-4).

Ans. Acres thinks that his earlier failure with Lydia was due to his fox-hunting country-gentleman's dress and therefore when he has come to Bath to renew his addresses to her, he has attired himself according to the latest fashions at Bath and feels extremely satisfied about it. He stands before his servant David to extract admiration from him enquiring whether the dress becomes him well.

David replies that his master appears quite a changed man in his new dress. With a sly and witty insinuation, he

assures his master that he has immensely improved himself to appear like a gallant fop of Bath. He expresses a caustic wish that the printed cloth with his master's caricature will soon appear in the cloth-shops of Bath, and will be sold by the name of 'The Devonshire Macaroni'. It was customary at Bath to have caricatures of well-known macaronis on sale in print shops David wishes that his master may soon be one of such famous fops of the fashionable town.

The speech of David expresses his simple but slightly caustic wit and shrewdness. It represents Acres as a foolish country-gentleman trying to ape the fashions of the town fops.

(22) Acres. *The thunder of........do such deeds.* (Act III. Sc. IV. L. 106-108).

Ans. This is Acres' speech addressed to Sir Lucius. When he has informed Sir Lucius that Mrs. Malaprop dismissed him as a suitor to Lydia, the pugnacious old Irishman, incites him to challenge his rival immediately. Acres does not know about Sir Lucius' cleverness in persuading him thus. Since Sir Lucius is himself an aspirant for Lydia's hand, he wants to kill two birds with one stone in bringing Acres and Beverley, both his rivals, to fight. Acres soon agrees to do it, and pretends that anger is rising in him against his rival.

He swears in the name of bullets and guns and declares that he is fully prepared for a duel. He says that just as thunder is superstitiously believed to sour the milk in mothers' breasts, so the brave incitings of Sir Lucius have nullified all kind and tender feelings in his heart. Acres tries to ape the well-read gallants in his speech and jumbles his faint memories from Shakespeare's plays. His reference to milk of human kindness echoes his memories of Lady Macbeth's speech for her husband wherein she says about him that he is 'too full of the milk of human kindness." Then Acres fumbles with a speech of Hamlet in Act III. Sc. II and grossly misquotes it. The real speech is :

"Now could I drink hot blood, And do such bitter

business . . . ." etc. Acres by his misquotation from Hamlet means that he is awfully angry and is in a mood to kill his adversary in the duel.

The speech presents Acres to us as a braggart and a hypocrite. He has all along been afraid of fighting but he never leaves alone a chance of swaggering. He also tries to appear like a well-read foppish youth but fails miserably in the attempt. He grossly misquotes from Shakespeare and makes a mess of the memories of his past readings; or who knows, he might only have heard them quoted in polite society.

ACT IV. SCENE I

(23) David. *Look'ee, master. . . . . come of 'em.* (Act IV. Sc. I. L. 9-12).

Ans. David has come to know that incited by Sir Lucius, his master has agreed to fight a duel, with dangerous weapons like swords and pistols. He is very much concerned with his master's safe return to his country home. He also knows that Acres can never win against an enemy; so he is trying to persuade him not to fight. He says that he hates such blood-thirsty people as Sir Lucius and would never have been persuaded to fight himself.

David goes on to add that he is not so much against fighting itself, as against the fatal weapons like swords and poistols with which his master is going to fight. He can understand anyone taking part in a boxing bout or fighting with a stout pole staff or a cudgel; in such a case he will never dissuade anyone from the encounter. But a fight with swords that cut sharply and with pistols that have loud raps of shots is inconceivable to him. Such fights are always very harmful and dangerous.

In this speech David comes before us as a sincere servant concerned with the utmost welfare of his master. His common-sense logic in not agreeing to fight with fatal weapons is incontrovertible. He is a country-bred fellow and so favours the use of innocent weapons like

poles or cudgels, which are little harmful or at least are not fatal.

ACT IV. Scene II

(24) Mrs. Malaprop. *Ay, Sir, there's no more . . . . are you?* (Act IV, Sc. II. L. 261-263.)

Ans. When it was known that Capt. Absolute is Beverley, Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony left Lydia and Capt. Absolute alone in the room to make up their tiff and talk of love. As they return, they see Lydia weeping and accusing Capt. Absolute of treachery and deceit. They do not understand why it should be so. Sir Anthony wonders if his son has proved to be neither Absolute nor Beverley but a third person.

Mrs. Malaprop seconds the statement of Sir Anthony. She asks if the captain has chosen to play yet another trick on them. It is just possible that he was neither of the two characters he had chosen to represent, and has turned out to be really a third person. Thus in being three different gentlemen at the same time, he can be likened to the three-headed monster-dog of the underworld. As cereberus, the watchdog of Pluto, had three heads, thus representing three dogs in one, the young man here seems to be three personalities in one, two of which have already been known and the third might have been the cause of their present uneasy state.

Mrs. Malaprop has been parading her learning throughout the play. For once here, the reference given by her is correct although the comparison between the three-headed dog and the three personalities affected by a person, is not quite appropriate.

ACT IV. Scene III

(25) Capt. Absolute. *Ay, just as the eyes . . . . with a frown.* (Act IV. Sc. III. L. 79-83).

Ans. Capt. Absolute meets Faulkland after he has been compelled to accept the challenge of Sir Lucius. He has

already been worried with Lydia's angry rejection of him and so in desperateness thinks it better to be knocked down in the duel. Faulkland is surprised to hear the words of disappointment from Absolute for he thinks that Capt. Absolute's disclosure that he is Beverley, should have been welcome to Lydia. She loved Beverley, who has turned out to be the same person as her guardian wants her to accept as in duty bound.

Capt. Absolute with sarcastic humour, comments that Lydia's sense of duty and love point to the same object i.e. to Absolute, as do the eyes of a person who squints. He means that just as the two eyes of a person with squint, can never look together towards one object, Lydia is not prepared to look to him. When a squint-eyed person looks to one side, his one eye looks to that side, while the other appears to be looking in the opposite direction. The same thing happens when he chooses to look to any other direction. Similarly when Lydia's of love was fixed at him, she never looked at her duty towards her guards and now when both the love-eye and the duty-eye were to be fixed at Absolute, the love—eye at once turned away from him and he was rejected as a lover.

The speech points out Absolute's sincerity of love for Lydia. He is really very much dejected in being jilted by her. However, he has a sense of humour which is his great asset when he is in distress. This speech proves the fact.

ACT V. SCENE I

(26) Faulkland. *O Love !—tormentor ! . . . . to madness.* (Act V. Sc. I. L. 126-129).

Ans. Faulkland in his morbid zeal to test Julia's love tells her a concocted story of his distress. When it appears to Faulkland that she is faithful in her love to him, he tells her the truth. Julia is so shocked at her lover's behaviour that she flies into a temper, rejects her lover for good, and goes out of the room utterly broken

with tears. Faulkland then indulges in a self-denunciating soliloquy. These are the concluding lines of that soliloquy and in it he blames the god of love as a tormentor and justifies himself as a true lover.

The god of love, according to Faulkland is like a cruel fiend or devil, who likes to torment the persons in love. Love's influence on persons is like the moon's. The moon is supposed to affect people of dull souls adversely, in making them foolish; so does Love make the dull and insensible persons behave in an idiotic manner. The effect of moon and love on men of subtle and delicate minds, lies in diverting them from their right course of action. The tenderness of sensitive lovers gets much excited and they become restless or frenzied like mad people. Faulkland counts himself among the latter kind. He feels, he is a delicate and sensitive lover. That is why he has been feeling love pangs very intensely and has also been behaving like a mad fellow in suspecting Julia's true love and torturing her with repeated tests of it.

Faulkland here behaves like a man who feels he is at fault, yet tries to shift the blame on others. In the artificial style of a sentimental lover, he holds the god of love responsible for his evils and Julia's sufferings. As ever, he also tries to flatter himself by imagining that he is an ideal lover with a delicate and sensitive soul.

(27) Lydia. *There had I projected . . . . with disappointment.* (Act V. Sc. I. L. 157-162).

Ans. This was said by Lydia to Julia. After she came to know that her Beverley was Capt. Absolute, she was extremely disappointed and came to her cousin to get her sympathy. There she learnt that Julia had all along known the secret and favoured her accepting Capt. Absolute. This caused her further shock and she burst out in an expression of passionate regret.

She feels extremely unhappy for all her romantic plans have come to a nought. What a nice plan was hers!—to disguise herself so befittingly for one of the

most romantic elopements. She would have got down from her room with the help of a nice rope-ladder to leap into her lover's arms for being escorted to Scotland, in a coach drawn by four horses. All this would have happened under a bright moon witnessing their escape and sympathising with them. Then would they have gone to Scotland, only to be married informally with mutual consent and without any humdrum formality. How much surprised and shocked would her aunt have been to learn of her runaway marriage and the newspapers of Bath might have written about her romantic elopement in nice paragraphs. All that has now been nullified and she is in such a desperate state that the disappointment almost appears killing.

The speech clearly indicates how foolishly sentimental and unwisely romantic has Lydia been. Her mind is full of her readings in the romances and cheap novels, from whence she had scrupulously collected each detail of her elopement. Whereas, according to Julia, she ought to have been happy at Absolute turning out to be Beverley, she is dying with disappointment. That shows the difference between the two cousins, one possessing enough common-sense and the other foolish sentimentality.

(28) Lydia. *Now—sad reverse ! . . . . called spinster.* (Act V. Sc. I. L. 164—171).

Ans. This is the speech of Lydia in which she expresses her disappointment to Julia on her plans of romantic elopements going futile, since Capt. Absolute has turned out to be Beverley. She is extremely shocked that instead of being able to mortify her aunt with a runaway marriage, she will have to undergo all the dull routine of an arranged wedding, commonly witnessed.

She laments that there has been a sad reversal in her fortune. All that she can expect now, in place of a romantic runaway marriage, is that a common humdrum wedding will be arranged and her husband being of her aunt's choice, she will come and bless her while the bishop will grant her a marriage licence. She will be carried to the altar like a common bride and before she

is married, there will be completed the formality of announcing her marriage by the bishop, on three successive Sundays. Alas! every commoner of the countryside, who is usually of the standard of a butcher, will be allowed the pleasure of not objecting to her marriage and then will an ugly and unmannerly rustic act as a clerk in uniting Lydia, the maid with, John Absolute. 'spinster' being the vulgar for an unmarried girl, will be such an offensive word to her that she would not like to live to hear it.

ACT V. Scene III.

(29) Sir Lucius. *For instance now . . . . lying in the Abbey.* (Act V. Sc. III. L. 33-36).

Ans. Sir Lucius and Bob Acres are at King's Mead-fields, where the former has been fulfilling the preliminaries of the intended duel between Acres and Beverley, and explaining to Acres how he should tackle his adversary in fighting him. As Sir Lucius details the duties of the second, Acres gets more and more afraid to think of the dire consequences that might follow. Sir Lucius has just asked Acres what he would like his second to do in case he comes to a quietus *i.e.* death.

Sir Lucius further enquires that in case Acres dies in the duel, will he like his body to be embalmed and sent home for burial, or will it be the same to him if he is buried in the Abbey at Bath. In a mood of humour and sarcasm Sir Lucius adds that he has heard that the Abbey at Bath provides a very comfortable rest for the dead. So it will be quite fine if Acres chooses to be buried there.

According to the formalities of the duellists, they inform their second how they would like their bodies disposed of, their affairs settled, or wills executed, in case they get killed. Sir Lucius asks these questions in the usual course but to Acres they suggest horrifying possibilities and he gets awfully nervous. It is in its effect on Acres that the whole interest of Sir Lucius' speech lies.

(30) Julia. ***When heart deserving . . . . . . leaves are dropt.*** (Act V. Sc. III. L. 316-320).

These are the concludig lines of the play. The two pairs of lovers have been happily united and everybody is in a mood to enjoy the occasion. Julia thinks that they should not commit the mistake of pursuing the false and short-lived pleasures. For the two couples in particular she delivers a moralising speech in which the virtues of married love are extolled and only modest joys recommended for them.

According to Julia when young and virtuous lovers are united in marriage, they deserve lasting happiness for they are trube and sincere in their love for each other. Their virtue recommends that the husband and wife should enjoy lasting pleasures without experiencing the harm in them. It is as if they should get happiness from the colour and sweet odour of a flower without feeling the prick of its thorns and the flower should also be a lasting one. Such a couple should be careful not to run after a comparatively gaudy but short-lived flower, *i.e.*, they should not pursue vain deluding joys, to which their unwise passion might attract them. The petals of such outwardly attractive flowers fade and fall soon leaving the pain of its loss and the repentance on their folly. Similarly the pleasures of excessive passion are short-lived and they leave behind a weary and repentent spirit, unfortunate in the extreme. Just as the goddess of virtue rewards its votaries with lasting pleasures, the goddess of passion deceives its followers with a few colourful roses in the common garland of virtue. When the leaves of such roses drop down, their thorns continue to prick. So the lovers should not be mad after the joys of passion but content themselves with modest virtuous pleasures.

Julia's speech is more sententious and sentimental than meaningful or moral. Sheridan again shows himself here yielding to the strong sentimental tendency of

the age. He chooses this moralising speech as a fit close for his play, in order to please his audience with the pious sentiments which they prided in favouring. The speech is quite an achievement in the sentimental style of writing, since it is clothed in the most artificial diction and figurative circumlocution.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

N. B.—The following is a list of some important questions on the play and the playwright. For answers to them reference has been made to the relevant sections of the book.

Q. 1. Write an essay on the 18th century comedy, with special reference to Sheridan.

A. 1. See General Introduction : On the Author : Sections 4 and 5.

Q. 5. What was Sheridan's reaction to the sentimental comedy of his times ? Discuss with special reference to *The Rivals*.

A. 2. See the General Introduction : On the Author : Sections 5 and 6 and also, On the Rivals : Sec. 5.

Q. 3. Write a short estimate of Sheridan as a dramatist.

A. 3. See General Introduction : On the Author : Section 7.

Q. 4. Discuss the charge that Sheridan himself could not successfully keep away the sentimental element he sought to deride.

A. 4. See Gen. Intro : On the Author : Sec. 6. Also see : On the Rivals : Sec. 15.

Q. 5. Attempt a brief note the Sheridan's contribution to the English comedy.

A. 5. See Gen. Intro : On the Author : Secs 7 and 8.

Q. 6. Write, in short, and appreciation of Sheridan's literary style in his plays.

A. 6, See Gen. Intro : On the Author : Sec. 9.

Q. 7. What do you know about the social and literary background against which *The Rivals* ? was written ?

A. 7. See Gen. Intro : On the Rivals : Section 1.

Q. 8. Attempt a brief note on the circumstances of the composition and production of the *The Rivals*.

A. 8. See, Gen. Intro : On the Rivals. Sec. 2.

Q. 9. Write a detailed account of the sources of *The Rivals*.

Q. 10. The genius of Sheridan was not original. Discuss with special reference to *The Rivals*.

Q. 11. Defend Sheridan against the charge of plagiarism in *The Rivals*.

Q. 12. Is *The Rivals* on autobiographical play ?

Answers 9, 10, 11 and 12. See General Introduction : On the Rivals : Sections 3 and 15. Also see the Summary and Critical Hints on the Preface.

Q. 13. Justify and explain the title of the play, *The Rivals*

A. 13. See Gen. Intro : On the Rivals : Sec. 4.

Q. 14. Give a general estimate of *The Rivals* as a Comedy.

A. 14. See Gen. Intro : On the Rivals : Sec. 5.

Q. 15. What do you understand by a Comedy of manners ? Examine *The Rivals* as such a Comedy.

Q. 16. In what direction was Sheridan's work for the *Comedy of Manners* an improvement upon Restoration Comic play.

Answers 15 and 16 See Gen. Intro : On the Rivals : Sec. 6.

Q. 17. Examine the statement that *The Rivals* is a farce rather than a Comedy.

A. 17. See Gen. Intro : On the Rivals : Sec. 7.

Q. 18. *The Rivals* is primarily a drama of situation and intrigue. Discuss.

A. 18 See Gen. Intro : On the Rivals : Sec. 8.

Q. 19. Sheridan's first impulse towards drama was always satiric. Discuss with special reference to *The Rivals*.

A. 19. See Gen. Intro : On the Rivals : Sec. 9.

Q. 20. What do you know about Bath in Sheridan's time from *The Rivals*.

Q. 21. The life at Bath was successfully used by Sheridan as a background for his first play. Discuss.

Answers 20 and 21. See Gen. Intro. On the Rivals: Sections 10 and 11.

Q. 22 Write an essay on Sheridan's art of characterization in *The Rivals*.

A. 22. See Gen Intro : On The Rivals : Sec. 12.

Q. 23. What is Malapropism ? Do you agree with Capt. Absolute's description of Mrs. Malaprop as "the old weather-beaten he-dragon" ?

A. 23. See Gen. Intro : On The Rivals : Sec. 13.

Q. 24. Discuss the function and importance of the minor characters in *The Rivals*.

A. 24. See Gen. Intro : On The Rivals : Sec. 14.

Q. 25. Examine the weaknesses of *The Rivals*.

A. 25. See Gen. Intro : On The Rivals : Sec. 15.

Q. 26. Why did Sheridan and a preface to *The Rivals* when it had already succeeded on the stage ? Examine his Preface as a piece of self-criticism.

A. 26. See Scene wise Summary and critical hints : Sec. 1. The Preface.

Q. 27. What was Sheridan's purpose in writing the First Prologue to *The Rivals* ?

A. 27. See Scene-wise Summary : Sec. 2.

Q 28. How did Sheridan attack the Sentimental Comedy of his times in his Second Prologue ? How was he led to write it ?

A. 28. Scene-wise Summary : Sec. 3.

Q. 29. Account for the continued popularity of *The Rivals*.

A. 29. For hints only, see Gen. Intro : On The Rivals : Sec. 5.

Q. 30. Give the character-sketch of the following :—

(a) Sir Anthony Absolute (b) Capt. Absolute (c) Faulkland (d) Lydia (e) Julia.

A. 30. See Gen. Intro : On The Rivals : Section 16. Parts (i) (ii) (iii) (vii) and (viii).

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